

Palestine 1945



A CHRISTIAN REPORT ON ISRAEL



An Account of the American Christian Palestine Committee Study Tour to Israel, May, 1949



THE MEMBERS OF THE STUDY TOUR IN AN ISRAELI VILLAGE:
Seated in the background, from left to right, Dr. Edel, Rev. Dr. Jones, Dean Pollock, Mr. Dana, Mrs. Freese, Mayor Church. Seated in the foreground,

from left to right, Rev. Mr. Baehr, Rev. Mr. Youngdahl, Mr. Irwin, Rev. Mr. Hollis. Standing, Judge Holt and Mrs. Blanche J. Shepard, Director of Club Program Service of the American Christian Palestine Committee.

Foreword

AFTERNOON on a mid-April day, shortly after Easter of 1949, a group of distinguished educators, editors, jurists, and churchmen gathered in the Solarium of the Bar-bizon Hotel in New York City for a bon voyage luncheon. Eleven of their number were to sail for Europe the following morning aboard the SS Queen Mary, and were scheduled to fly, a week later, from Paris to Rome and on across the Mediterranean to Lydda airport in Israel. Each of the eleven had been chosen by his respective community to represent the local chapter of the American Christian Palestine Committee. Led by the Rev. Karl Baehr, executive secretary of the Committee, they were to make a study tour of Israel.

At the luncheon, brief addresses were given by Dean Howard M. LeSourd of Boston University (from 1944 to 1947, director of the ACPC) and Mr. Robert St. John, war correspondent and author of *Shalom Means Peace*. Miss Freda Kirchwey, editor of the *Nation*, was also scheduled to speak but illness kept her confined to her home. From all three came good wishes to these travelers who had "the singular opportunity to learn more of the miracle of Zion reborn."

The only "instruction" given the group was my reminder concerning their "unique responsibility of returning with new, factually correct information," for, as I commented: "Too often is Israel inaccurately interpreted, unjustly accused of wrong doing and unfairly described to the general public. We ask you to return with only one requirement fulfilled: come with facts and established truths so that misinformation and untruths about Israel may be dispelled."

The modern pilgrimage of our eleven travelers to the Holy Land was not a "guided tour" in the sense that restrictions and prohibitions were imposed on specified travel zones. Nor were there insistent demands that the tourists see certain sites and spots, specially chosen as show windows for display. They traveled where they pleased. From the Lebanese border in the north to the Negev in the south, literally from Dan to Beersheba—and further. The only supervision of the tour was the minimum necessary for efficient travel and to enable them to cover as wide an area as possible. There were no "musts", unless one is to except the injunction to keep cameras out of sight and heads lowered when, in the New City of Jerusalem, the travelers watched Arab Legionnaires walk along the walls of the Old City. Or the strict orders not to enter abandoned Arab villages or cross battle-torn fields for fear of land mines.

To make the Study Tour more spontaneous and creative, to avoid the contrived and the artificial, all press and radio interviews were shunned. Publicity was a secondary consideration. The facts came first, for the truth was the primary concern.

The editor of a leading Protestant periodical smiled at the announcement of the Study Tour, and in a brief editorial ventured the hope that the study tour of the American Christian Palestine Committee would visit the Christians among the Arab refugees outside of Israel. Just why the Moslems among the Arab refugees were omitted from his advice still remains a riddle. But the Study Tour members tried to do just that, to visit Arab refugees and to enter the Old City of Jerusalem, which is now in the hands of the Arabs. Through no fault of theirs, these efforts were in vain. The Israelis helped all they could, granting permission for passage through the lines, but not so the Arabs. Nor the American consular officials in Jerusalem who seemed quite reluctant to grant assistance, giving a variety of excuses. The Study Tour members tried also to enter the Arab refugee area in Lebanon, and at Gaza—but to no

avail. In Israel itself, the Study Tour participants traveled widely, interviewed all manner of Israelis, both Jew and Arab, and sought out the facts of Israeli life.

When these travelers returned to their homes, they reported to their constituents—each in his own way and in accordance with his particular talent: Spencer Irwin, Marshall Dana, Louise Freese, and Judge George E. Holt, in newspaper articles; Harvey Hollis, Stanley Church and Reuben Youngdahl in lectures and addresses; Dean Thomas Clark Pollock, President William Edel, the Rev. Karl Baehr and Dr. John Paul Jones in magazine articles. They have selected subject matter of particular interest to each and have included that material in this publication, *A Christian Report on Israel*. I commend this report to you.

THREE months later, I went to Israel and spent a good part of the summer on a study tour of my own. The over-all reaction I had was epitomized in my comments in the Tel Aviv broadcast of the Town Meeting of the Air on its Round the World Tour: "As an American and as a non-Jew, I have only admiration for the zeal and determination manifested in the new state of Israel, the newest republic in the world and the only genuine democracy in the entire Middle East."

After returning from Israel, I am even more disturbed by the reluctance of many of our anti-Israel Christians to give even de facto recognition to the new republic. Some of them seem still to be fighting the old and out of date battle of "Zionism versus anti-Zionism." They utter not a word of protest against the wanton aggression launched last year against the new Israel by Arab states. But they do "view with alarm" what they believe to be a possibility that Israel may "cast covetous eyes" on the nearby territory of Transjordan. They express their concern for the security of the Holy Places but fail to note that the Holy Places within Israel (only seven per cent of the Holy Places are in the Jewish state) are carefully safeguarded.

After reading the reports of these American Christians on their study tour of Israel, and after making a study tour on my own, I am convinced that Christians should be grateful for the new Jewish state for at least three reasons:

1) *The Holy Land is being redeemed today.* The charm and loveliness which once graced that sacred spot are being restored.

2) *Israel is a democratic leaven in the midst of a feudal and often proto-fascist Middle East.* Here is a democratic ferment, a social change which is certainly the best assurance against violent reaction of both Right and Left. Israel is the Western world's best guarantee against the spread of communism in the Middle East, for communism develops amid ignorance, disease and poverty, all three of which are defied by Israel in the great democratic tradition of the West. Communism stands little chance of success in the Middle East if it relies on Israel.

3) *Here is a creative task of atonement to which all Christians can give support.* By helping the new Israel, by encouraging its growth, and by interpreting it correctly and sympathetically to the general public, Christians can take part in an enterprise which is, in truth, an act of atonement—an atonement for the persecution of Jews by Christians through centuries, and the perpetuation, until recent times, of Jewish national homelessness.

By helping our Jewish friends fulfill their aspirations for nationhood, we will ultimately bring benefits to the entire Middle East and thus bring new meaning to the universal implications of the Judaic-Christian tradition.

CARL HERMANN VOSS
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Contributors

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After Twenty-five Years

TWENTY-FIVE years before, I had approached Palestine from the east. In 1924, after two years of teaching philosophy to Moslem, Hindu, Sikh, and a few Christian students in the Punjab University, India, I had gone up the Persian Gulf to Iraq, stayed for some time in Baghdad, and then crossed the desert to Aleppo. From Aleppo I had gone south to Damascus and Beyrouth, and then down the Mediterranean to Haifa and Jaffa and inland to Jerusalem and Jericho. Just north of Jaffa there were in 1924 a number of houses being built on the sand in a new Jewish suburb.

In 1949 I approached Israel from the west. With ten other members of the study tour of the American Christian Palestine Committee, I flew from Paris to Rome and from Rome to Lydda. On the first day of May we saw the brown sands of Israel emerge from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. When the airplane landed at Lydda Airport and we walked out in the morning sun, what I noticed first was the sweet scent of flowers. The fragrance of the desert's blooming is a significant introduction to the achievement of Israel.

We drove from Lydda Airport to our hotel on Ben Yehuda Street in the thriving all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv. The little Jewish suburb of Jaffa which I had noted in passing twenty-five years before had become in a quarter of a century the great bustling twentieth-century city of Tel Aviv, with a population of over three hundred thousand people.

The study tour of the American Christian Palestine Committee saw a great many things and a great many people before it took the plane back to Rome two weeks later. We went to Beersheba and Negba and Jerusalem and Abu Ghosh and Rehovoth and Nathanya and Haifa and Acre and Naharya and Safed and Tiberias and Deganya. We visited kibbutzim and moshavim and immigration reception centers and children's villages and orange factories and schools and military cantonments and hospitals and the Knesset and Hakirya and the Central Synagogue of Tel Aviv on the first anniversary of Israeli independence. We talked to hundreds of people, city and country,

Arab and Jew, religious and non-religious. Indeed, we saw and tried to understand so much that we were often in danger of mental indigestion. And yet the strongest single impression I had at the end of the tour was that which I had when I first saw Tel Aviv — an awareness of the tremendous achievement which the Jewish people have made in Palestine in little more than a quarter of a century. The growth of Tel Aviv from a handful of houses in the sand outside the Arab city of Jaffa to a modern Jewish metropolis is merely one symbol of this achievement.

The members of the study tour of the American Christian Palestine Committee were committed to nothing except to find out what we could, each with his own eyes, about what had happened and was happening in the new State of Israel. We were all Protestant Christians of various denominations. I was told that we were the first such Christian group to visit Israel since it had become a state. We were from many parts of the country and had various occupations.

I believe the group as a whole shared my general impressions of Israel, though none of the others had had the opportunity to visit Palestine before; but — unlike many earlier "missions" to Palestine — we were under no necessity to bring back a common report; and each of us is free to report the truth as he sees it. What I am attempting to suggest here are a few of my own impressions.

THE actual achievement of the Zionists in Palestine in the last few decades is an amazing historical fact. Perhaps it amazes one who has lived as I have in the age-old east, where change is slow and strongly resisted by tradition, even more than it does those who know only America, where we are accustomed to making cities grow overnight. But it is nevertheless an extraordinary historical fact that the Jews have made many parts of the Palestinian desert bloom like the proverbial rose. They have established hundreds of Jewish agricultural communities of varying social patterns. Tel Aviv has grown from nothing to the stature of an ultra-modern city. Even if you are

one of the many who prefer the ancient, rock-like solidity of Jerusalem or the extravagant harbor beauty of Haifa to the café-society modernity of Tel Aviv, the practical constructive achievement of the Jews in the cities and country of Palestine during the first half of the twentieth century is one of the most important historical facts of the contemporary world.

In Israel, Western civilization has come to the Middle East; and it has come to stay. The term, Western civilization may be misinterpreted. I do not mean by it here cold-war-Western versus cold-war-Eastern, though to the degree that Western civilization is based on individual thought and initiative and Eastern civilization is based on totalitarian control from the top, it includes this, too. I mean rather the habit which the Western world has more than the Eastern of trying to solve every new problem which arises with scientific intelligence, individual initiative, and general goodwill. In this real sense, Zionism, whatever its spiritual roots in the history of Judaism, has brought Western civilization to the Middle East. The people of Israel are determined to face their problems, not merely or even primarily by appeal to tradition, even when they are zealous about religious observances, but rather by applying fresh initiative, energy, and scientific intelligence within a great ethical tradition. *If I had to sum up in a sentence the most general pattern of activity in the new State of Israel, I should say that the Israelis are determined to use active intelligence, brotherhood and good will to solve every practical problem they face in their country.* It is entirely fitting that a diplomat and man of affairs who is also a distinguished practical chemist, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, should be the first president of Israel.

This emphasis on the determination of the Israeli people points to a fact which one must grasp, I think, if he is to understand what has actually been happening and probably will happen in the next decade on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

The Israelis are determined to create in Palestine a homeland worthy of the ideals of the Jewish people. They constitute an active, coherent human force striving toward a definite goal. A dynamic force does not stand still. The situation in Palestine today is not what it was thirty years ago, or twenty, or ten; and it is not, I predict, what it will become ten years hence. The Arab world is not entirely static, but it is comparatively passive, characterized rather by feudal tradition, unrest, and poten-

tial turbulence than by directed drive into the future. I think that many of the errors which the British, the Americans, and the United Nations have made in the Middle East have arisen from the fact that most of the people of the world who have thought about Palestine at all, have evaluated the *status quo* in the Arab world much more accurately than they have the dynamic drive of Zionism and the people of Israel. I hope that our evaluation of the facts in the Middle East will be better in the future.

One of the most important ways in which this intelligent dynamism shows itself is in the application of science and technology, as well as Jewish moral idealism, to the practical problems in Palestine. The Weizmann Institute at Rehovoth, for example, is already a well-established group of scientific laboratories giving facilities to a number of excellent scientists working as a team, who are attempting to combine the practice of pure scientific research and the application of research into the technical problems of Palestinian agriculture and industry.

In social, political, and economic matters, as well as in agricultural and industrial, scientific knowledge is constantly being applied in Israel. Time after time I was struck by the way in which the social and political theories of the nineteenth century, which I had known only from textbooks or from the records of the Brook Farm experiment in New England, for example, had been put into practice with an interesting variety of intelligent modifications in the towns and cooperative villages—the kibbutzim and moshavim—of Israel.

This application of thought and scientific research to the practical problems of social organization and human welfare in Israel cannot but have its effects, direct and indirect, in the Arab world.

ONE of the most interesting human realities in Israel today is the extraordinary sense of joy in the people. I do not mean that Israel is a paradise or that everybody is always happy. Indeed, it is a land beset by complex and profound problems — problems so great that only a great determination and a great faith can hope to solve them. But in the midst of these many problems, the people as a whole have an unusual feeling of happiness. It is *their* land. They have returned home. They have, often enough, reasons for bitterness, but they are far less bitter than many people with happier personal histories. They hope to live and to make



The head men of the Druse village of Isfiya greet the members of the Study Tour.

Israel a land of justice and security for themselves, their children, and their children's children. But if they must die to protect it, they will die at least fighting on their own soil for their homeland. This attitude both results from, and leads to, a sense of dedication to a cause greater than themselves which is in the broadest sense "religious," even in the groups in Israel which are most openly non-religious in the stricter sense.

Gingy, the red-haired, hard-bitten taxi driver who drove a few of us into Galilee, put it to me directly one morning as we were leaving the immigration reception center near Haifa. "We are not fighters," he said. He himself is a veteran of much fighting. "We do not want to be fighters. For two thousand years the Jews have not had an army. But we have nowhere else to go except die. So we fight or die; and we fight so that our people shall not die. What else can we do? But we are not fighters. We want peace."

And the people of Israel have already attained an inner peace, a peace of the spirit, to a far greater degree, I think than have most of the other people of the world, Jew or Gentile. They sing in the streets and often dance from spontaneous joy. Tel Aviv often reminded me, in the youthful exuberance of the people on its streets, of a small-town college in the fall when the students have just returned.

With this sense of spontaneous happiness goes a real striving for beauty. One sees flowers and flower gardens almost everywhere. To put it crudely, beauty and social justice are regarded in Israel as highly desirable social goods, worth working and paying for. A refugee children's

village at Raanana on the Sharon Plain, for example, had to house a new group of children temporarily in tents. But the children were not accepted in the village until a flower garden could be planted in front of each tent. In the farming village of Shave Zion, just south of Naharya, where water is at a premium, the community gives water free to the settlers, who live in private houses, so that they may have flower gardens in front of their houses without having to think about cost.

THE PROBLEM of assimilation of immigrants into Israel is, of course, very important. It will take the best efforts of the people in Israel and of Jewry outside of Palestine to solve it satisfactorily. To the people in the new State who have already become psychologically Israelis rather than Poles or Germans or South Africans, who can think and speak easily in Hebrew, and who have found a satisfactory place for themselves in the economy of the new country, are being added monthly many thousands of newcomers from all parts of the world and from many different linguistic and social backgrounds. The percentage of newcomers is very great. Nearly one third of the population of Israel was not there when the state was founded a little over a year ago. Inevitably, a major part of the effort of the people of Israel must go into the speedy assimilation of these immigrants.

Perhaps the most obvious fact in Israel — and a fact which in the long view will help greatly to solve the problem of assimilation — is the extraordinary emphasis on the welfare and education of children. Israel belongs to its youth. In the cities and the country settlements, as well as in Youth Aliyah and the excellent children's villages, one sees this accent on youth. It is more than merely a normal human love of children, or merely a normal Jewish love of children. To this normal love is added a realization that Israel, for all of its long history, belongs to the future; that the adults now living in Israel, however devoted to their new homeland, are for the most part children of exile; but that their children are now in the fullest sense the children of Israel.

I flew back from Lydda Airport to Rome on May 15, 1949, convinced that the young State of Israel, whose first birthday I had had the pleasure of helping to celebrate on May 4 in Tel Aviv, is not only a uniquely interesting historical achievement but also a positive force for good in the confused and embattled world of the mid-twentieth century.

By What Right?

THE IDEA OF partition as the only feasible solution of the Palestine question was from time to time entertained by responsible statesmen during the period of the British Mandate. It had been proposed by the Royal Commission of 1937. Yet it was equally difficult to see how it could be brought about. Perhaps this accounts for the unrealistic schemes of so many men and commissions. History may record that the Jewish leaders, however, were not the most impractical. Many of them were ready to discuss partition long before it came up in any authoritative agenda. In the end it came to the United Nations and finally to the test of military strength because the Arab nations were adamant on the underlying issue, the continued existence of an autonomous Jewish homeland. They would have none of it.

The last days of the Mandate were indeed chaotic. The Administration lost all contact with the realities of the situation. Armed Arab bands roamed freely in the land. Far from protecting the Jewish settlement, the Administration was overzealous in making sure that the Jewish defense police — Haganah — did not grow to the proportions of an army. Assassination and massacre became the order of the day. What the Jews called defense appeared as aggression to both British and Arabs. Somehow the Stern Band and Irgun Zvai Leumi got bombs and arms and certainly the Arabs had plenty of both. The Administration finally arrested the outstanding Jewish leaders and with them committed many hundreds of Jews to jail on charges of conspiracy. Shortly afterwards one wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem blew up killing a hundred people, nearly half of the senior British officials perishing with them. The Palestinian Administration was bankrupt. Britain decided to give up the Mandate and on May 15, 1948 the impressive and elaborate police stations which dotted the land, stood empty.

Before the British announced their relinquishment of the Mandate and threw the whole matter into the lap of the United Nations, one of the most noteworthy of the many Commissions made its report. That was the Anglo-American Commission

which had been advocated in 1945 by Ernest Bevin, England's Foreign Minister, stimulated apparently by President Truman's suggestion of admitting 100,000 European Jews immediately into Palestine; which suggestion was not favorably received by Britain. The Commission report repeated Mr. Truman's recommendation about the 100,000 immigrants but will be remembered principally for a recommendation of continued trusteeship, looking toward the time when a single government could take over. The basis of this was a plausible contention that Palestine was a Holy Land sacred to Christian, Jew and Moslem alike, and that no nation could ever claim it as its own. Whatever the merits of this proposition¹, there seemed no feasible way to fit it into the historical realities of the times. The United Nations decided on partition; reconsidered and stuck to partition. It was a curious kind of arrangement with uneven and indefinite frontiers and leaving about as many non-Jews as Jews in the Homeland of Zion. The details we can leave to the historians, for the frontiers are yet to be defined. The Arab countries rejected the whole plan and did nothing to establish any kind of constituted authority over the part of Palestine assigned to Arab control. Instead, they organized a general strike and soon were advancing in open war. The Israelis soon quieted all doubts about the existence of a new state. Before the truces were obtained by the United Nations a few months hence, attacks were repulsed and in many places the frontiers pushed back.

War is a human frightfulness beyond the power of words to expose fully. The Jewish-Arab war was no exception. Yet it was short and not to be mentioned in the same breath with the terror of world conflict through which the major nations had just passed. Even so, atrocities against civilians were committed on both sides and as always the common people bore the brunt of the conflict. The scars in the cities, the ruined villages, the mass graves bear an eloquent if sombre testimony to

¹ It was rejected by the Arabs forthwith. Before the Jews made an official response it was killed by British action.

what Israel suffered. But the Arabs suffered most. More than 500,000 of them fled from the area of the new state as the six nations advanced with the thunder of their guns. Partly in fear of abuse or massacre but more because, it seems well established now, they were advised by the invaders who promised a quick return when the Jews were subdued. Yet, incredibly, the onslaught failed and bewildered and helpless refugees found themselves homeless in the hands of humiliated governments ill prepared by either human concern or a sense of responsibility, to care for them. Nothing more nakedly exposed the myth of Arab unity and the corruption and impotence of Arab political life than the failure to overcome the small Israeli State which fought with all the odds against it, save courage and purpose.

If one sees no solution in the present state of affairs let him ponder what the prospect would have been if the Arab states, with their separate and uncooperative armies, had over-run the Jewish Homeland. Would there have been a united control over Palestine in the interests of the common people? Is it not more likely that the Arab states would have fought each other, separately or in coalitions, for control of the country after the manner they operate in their own sovereignties? What is there in the current and dominant nationalisms of the Middle East that suggests vital concern for the social, economic, educational and cultural factors which give meaning to movements of human advance? What in their history or principles gives encouragement to the hope that Christian and Jewish minorities would have had any measure of freedom or tolerance?

NEVERTHELESS the question persists: By what right and for whose good do the Jews seek to dominate a land sacred to Christians and Moslems as well as Jews and in which Jews have been a small minority for centuries on end? This is the central question. Let us face it fairly and honestly.

Palestine is not a "Holy Land" in the same sense and to the same degree for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam the emphasis is not on Palestine as a Holy Land but on Jerusalem as a Holy City. Nor is Jerusalem the Holy City but one of the Holy Cities and not the first. Moreover, the central belief of Islam is submission to the will of Allah who is confined to no earthly abode though Mecca or Jerusalem may be his favored places. In Christianity the central doctrine is salvation through Christ, quite independent of material and

geographical considerations. But Christ was born in Palestine, conducted His ministry there and in Jerusalem came to His death and eternal victory. All the ground He touched will forever remain holy places. Yet Christianity early moved out and other lands have been the centers of its life and power. The great Christian saints, martyrs and administrators have not come out of Palestine. Indeed, after the early days there is not much of Palestinian Christianity of which to be proud and a great deal of which to be ashamed.

Judaism is different from either Islam or Christianity in its relationship to Palestine. With Israel the central belief is in the divine revelation of a way of life to be lived by people *in community*. It was revealed to men in a community and that community was Palestine. The sacred book of the Jew — the Old Testament — is a history as well as a spiritual source book. Separated from the land of revelation after a thousand years, and scattered over the earth, the Jew has never ceased to remember Zion save when he has lost or surrendered his religion. To those who maintain that Judaism has made a great contribution to the spiritual life divorced from the land and nation (and so God intended it), the Jew with equal logic may argue that God now wills the Jew's return even as the promises of his Scriptures foretell! But in point of fact modern Zionism has progressed with two practical motivations no less powerful than the religious and cultural. In the early days of Zionism, out of the ghettos of misery, Jews longed for a place where all trades and vocations would be open to them and a man could make a decent living. Later the anxiety for political security became a major compulsion in the plans for a Homeland.

True enough, for centuries other peoples have populated the land of Palestine and endured its tragedies and misrule. But in imagination millions of Jews have lived there too; and in the spiritual life, which is the real life of man, imagination is no fictitious part. But the Jew has also maintained a continuity of physical presence in Palestine for the whole of three thousand years. Sometimes and for long periods he has numbered but a few thousand but he has always been there. Moreover, one can ask an impressive list of questions, the answers to which show the reality of Palestine as a powerful factor for the Jew all through the centuries of the Christian era. From whence came the philosophy, ritual and inspiration for Jewish survival during the dispersion, hammered out in the third century? Where did the Masorites do their monumental

work in the seventh and eighth century? From whence came the fresh starts after the several crucial periods of breakdown in the Jewish life of the dispersion? Where was the center of Judaism in the dark period when the Jews were expelled from Spain and medieval European Jewish life flickered out? Where arose the Messianic mysticism which sustained the Jews of Eastern Europe through the misery of centuries? The answer to all of these questions is: Palestine.

BESIDES A passionate desire to establish a Homeland of their own, just what have the Jews brought to Palestine? It is still true that fruits reveal much about the nature and character of men and movements. How much of what is cherished and exalted by Christian, democratic civilization has been fostered in the thirty years of the National Home? Examination elicits an impressive answer. Education and health have been achieved for the whole people. It is significant that the foundation stones of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem were laid in the beginning and that the Weizmann Institute and the Rehovoth Agricultural Institute possess world-wide reputations. Clinics, hospitals, health, rest and convalescent centers are taken for granted. Racial tolerance and religious freedom, hard and imperfect achievements wherever they exist, have a good record. In spite of the violence and bloodshed, the unremitting Arab political intransigence and sterile fanaticism, the rank and file, Jew and non-Jew, have lived and worked side by side, bound together in the daily necessities of life and respecting each other's customs and beliefs.

Hundreds of synagogues have risen with their sacred vessels and enclosures but their use has been a matter for the individual conscience. General conformity on Sabbath observance, fundamental dietary considerations and other long established traditions appears to come by common consent. The courts reflect the solid achievements of Jewish jurisprudence and the civil government and parliamentary system. Labor is organized and the extremes of wealth and poverty have, up to now, been avoided. Freedom of speech and assembly are traditional. The first elections in the new state showed little tendency to the extremes of left and right. The first government is much like that of present day England in its political philosophy and principles.

Not last or least in importance has been the spirit of venture and experiment. The agricultural

settlements, one of the most important factors in the establishment of the incoming multitudes, represent a variety of designs for living, according to the ideas of the people who make up the individual settlement. They all represent some form of group cooperation and are run by elected managers and committees. Some are strictly communal, specialization being carried even to rearing of children by nurses, kindergartners, recreational directors, etc., rather than by parents! Almost every conceivable variant of cooperatives has been tried somewhere, while many settlements are merely closely knit villages, working the land in common, or individually under community approved plans and often with the heavy tools jointly owned. Everywhere the land belongs to the state, available only upon lease. This may run for life and to all practical purposes amounts to ownership. New experiments in land reclamation, irrigation and use, go on constantly in the deserts and plains and hillsides, as well as in the laboratories.

Yet today Israel stands in jeopardy, her future unpredictable. Sanctioned by the United Nations, her establishment actually the achievement of her own will and strength, it is a question whether her rebirth means bane or blessing to her own people and to mankind. The answer is not Israel's alone to give. Israel could fail without the fault being primarily her own. Even if she plays her hand well, with integrity and foresight, the outcome may still depend upon the measure in which external indifference, hostility or friendship prevail.

WALKING THE STREETS of Israel's cities and traveling over the land on the first anniversary of her independence, one was struck with the spirit of confidence and thanksgiving. One found remarkably little bitterness, but rather rejoicing that a long and dreadful ordeal was past and now, in the providence of God, Israel was on its own! There was pride that the first test of strength had exceeded their own expectations and a strong feeling that direct dealings with the Arab nations would bring terms of agreement of mutual advantage, since Israel and the Arab nations are dependent on each other in the practical necessities of life. Undoubtedly there was another kind of pride running to arrogance and chauvinism, with a thought for conquest and revenge, but I didn't find much of it in two weeks intensive travel and study of the land and people. There was a hunger for peace and a prominent recognition that peace was the indispensable necessity for the na-

tion. There was rejoicing that homeless brethren were coming in great numbers with no men-of-war to intercept them and turn them back. The main purpose of Israel was to make a home and the way and means to do it must and could be found! Land and homes and jobs must be made ready.

Against the background of my visit to the land I have watched and wondered these four intervening months. The peace that Israel needs and, I believe, craves, is by no means assured. The Arab leaders are still chagrined and dismayed by the frustration of their final argument, the resort to force against the Jewish homeland. The mediations of the U.N. Commission and the tact and skill of Ralph Bunche have helped in face-saving. But the minds of the Arab leaders are unchanged and no final settlement and agreement is near. Arab radios still beam their threats to Israeli citizens. Tragically, then, the first claim on the resources of the new state must be for defense and the military may achieve an ascendancy that will seriously hamper civilian affairs and civilian control. Just what will it mean if war breaks out again? Fortunately, with some of the tangles slowly unravelling, war does not seem likely in the near future.

Granted an era of peace, can Israel successfully meet the challenge — or threat — of the new immigrants? There is no nation on earth today that would voluntarily assume the risks Israel has undertaken. It would be quite enough for a nation in the best of economic health and strength to absorb like-minded and normal people in the proportions they have come during the last year. But the tens of thousands of abnormal immigrants have not only overwhelmed the established process of reception and placement; they have introduced alarming and menacing social and psychological factors. When I visited, in May, the Reception Centers were already bad enough: they have grown steadily worse. Irritation at being unable to go at once to a house or land; impatience with the routine of checking credentials and sponsorship; crowding; inadequate facilities; irregular schedules; makeshift first arrangements; and the exhaustion of officials made an unpleasant picture four months ago. Of the recent arrivals an appalling number are in wretched health, crestfallen fugitives from despair and defeat, full of envy of the comfortable citizens in city or settlement homes. A recent correspondent on the spot quotes these words as typical of the older Israeli feeling: "We

are getting to be a normal nation. Like any other country we now have our fair share of pickpockets, burglars, prostitutes and loafers."

Still passing through the centers by the thousands, the immigrants crowd and complain in the villages and cities and the older settler who came and shifted for himself has little sympathy when they turn sour or lawless because a new life cannot be handed them on a silver platter. One can easily imagine the gap in understanding between upward of a hundred thousand new arrivals living under canvas, homeless in the Homeland, and the proud Tel Avivians anchored in the achievements of their blood, sweat and tears. Yet it was for these hapless, ill assorted kinsmen that the great ordeal was endured! Will the Hebrew genius find a way to save both his new home and his people?

IN THE meantime other matters of the greatest urgency prevent the direction of energy and attention to any single problem, however great it is. Israel as yet has no constitution and no clearly defined procedures to guard and guide its political life. Labor and industry as organized forces are in an unsatisfactory, tangled inter-play. The chief Labor organization, through its corporate investments is one of the largest owners and employers! Schools have been neglected in the strife and confusion of recent years and are wholly inadequate to meet increasing demands in both personnel and subject matter. Religious orthodoxy threatens a fundamentalist crusade which can play havoc with the freedoms of religion and worship which multitudes of Palestinian Jews today take for granted — and which the world expects of any nation professing democratic ideals. And what shall we say of



The mosque at Beersheba stands unharmed.

economic determinism? Israel cannot possibly, now or for a long time, be self-sustaining.

To the thoughtful Jew, familiar with all these things, it appears both astonishing and unjust that at the mention of Palestine so many Christian leaders the world over appear to be interested only or primarily in the return of the Arab refugees. The tendency of these same leaders to blame Israel for the plight of the refugees has greatly strained Jewish-Christian relations.

Concern for the Arab refugees is commendable, for their situation is desperate and multitudes of them are just as innocent and defenseless as were the victims of Hitler's terror. But it is no mystery that the Jews are skeptical about the sudden interest in refugees on the part of nationals of great nations which could not find a way to receive into their vast territories, over a long period, as many war refugees as Israel accepted in a few months. The wide and insistent demand for return of the refugees, even in the midst of Israel's fight for life, seemed motivated by something besides humanitarian sentiment. Two wrongs do not make a right, but to make such demands on the new state in a world where the nations had just condoned the expulsion of a vast number of Germans from lands where they had lived for centuries, is to be oblivious to certain political realities. However, what the Jews resent is, from their point of view, a distortion of the picture. Certainly, Christian spokesmen have often failed to give a fair representation.

Upwards of one hundred thousand Arabs, both Christian and Moslem, remained unmolested in Israel during the war. Since hostilities ceased, the advantages of the country have been freely offered to them. I have witnessed the Arab villagers laying water mains and putting up electric lines, things symbolic of a life they never knew under their former bondage. Of the six hundred thousand or more made homeless, half of them were not within the borders defined for the New Israel by the United Nations partition. They resided in the portion assigned to the Arabs who made no effort to establish any government when the British withdrew. They were overrun and reduced to destitution by disorderly bands of their own kinsmen. If the Arab rulers feel any serious concern over this, it is less evident than the regret of the Jews for the outrages of their nationalists, such as the massacre at Deir Yassin.

That the Israelis have some responsibility in connection with those who fled from their borders,

they themselves admit. They want it remembered, however, that multitudes of these from the towns (perhaps a third of the total) left with all their possessions. Many of these are already resettled in neighboring states. If the government of Israel insists that refugee matters must be taken as a part of the over-all peace terms, including claims for war damages against the invaders, it has also disavowed intention of holding refugee property without compensation. Willingness to receive back large numbers, beginning with the reunion of separated families, has also been indicated. The refugees are primarily a responsibility of the Arab countries.

As for Jerusalem, especially the modern part, with its one hundred thousand Jews, it is obviously vital both as a matter of sentiment and politics. The Israelis mean to hold on to it and a connecting link to the sea. Yet they cannot be justly accused of ignoring the rights and claims of others relative to its sacred precincts.

The future of Palestine continues to be an affair of Moslems and Christians, as well as Jews. The hope lies in a fresh start and a new kind of cooperation. If Christians stand in any position of privilege their responsibility is all the greater. The regrettable fact is that Christians, inside and out, have never been much concerned with the major factors concerning the land and the people as a whole. It is generally conceded that the long period of Turkish misrule all but ruined the country. We forget that Turkey maintained her power largely by playing on the jealousies and rivalries of the Christian nations, all of them indifferent save for a few shrines and settlements. Even today, with the sudden new concern over Jerusalem and the holy places, Christians offer little evidence that they could make the Holy City of tomorrow any different from the sordid and quarrelsome center that has been a disgrace for centuries.

Whatever the future in Palestine, it can now be achieved only in cooperation with Israel. Will that cooperation be with the new state as an honorable ally, generously and in good faith, or negligently and sullenly as with an unworthy aggressor? There is much at stake in the answer to this question.

Dr. Jones' article appeared originally in the September, 1949 issue of "Social Progress," monthly publication of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

The Sense of History

THERE is a great deal in Israel to remind an American of home. It is a new land—as in Miami, one asks a friend first where he is from.

These thousands of newcomers are from all the corners of the earth—Poland and France, Germany, Great Britain, South Africa, the United States. Many tongues are spoken. It is not uncommon to meet someone who speaks easily, and often, in half a dozen languages.

But this new land is rooted in an ancient culture and history. What other people on earth could write and talk of simple, everyday matters against a background of the Major Prophets?

On one of our days in Jerusalem, the newspaper discussed the first year of independence.

"The Jews are a historically-minded people," it said. "It is natural, however, that in their reading of the records they should give more immediate attention to the dramatic moments of their story.

"At this particular moment of history, however, they would do well to study the more sober periods—the years of the first national settlement under Joshua and the Judges, the rebuilding under Ezra and Nehemiah, the day-to-day life when the Temple was the civil as well as the religious center of the nation.

"Beneath the splendors and solemnities of the Kings and the Priests, farmers worked in their fields and artisans at their trades . . . the Jews in their land were a working folk.

"They have made themselves that again. Now is the time for work."

THIS sense of history is on every side, in every conversation. Even the most casual items read as if from sacred books.

"In Tiberias, people from upper Galilee and the Jordan valley and their children danced and sang in praise." This is no ancient writing but a news report on the events of Independence Day, May 5, 1949.

The radio has no commercials. Each morning, the day's program opens with a Biblical quotation: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob . . ."

Another American, a non-Jew, made this observation after a trip such as ours:

"The more one studies the patterns of new life in Palestine, the more one becomes convinced of the enormous potentialities that this ancient land has, not only for Jews, but also for non-Jews outside of Palestine.

"The zeal of the Prophets of old for social justice inspired their descendants not only to revive their nation but to create a better and most just social order.

"These pioneers have quietly, patiently, practically with their sweat and blood, converted a neglected and more or less barren land into a flourishing community and have at the same time influenced the entire social thinking of this new community."

This makes Israel unique, significant. The aims of the government turn this nation into a social laboratory, building a Jewish homeland according to a plan as definite as blueprints for a bridge. Side by side, the teachings of the Hebrew Prophets and the most advanced modern thinkers in the political and social sciences are guides.

The world works and strives to achieve its destiny in this year 1949. The Jews of Israel have a longer view. For them, this is the year 5709.

IT was impossible to escape a feeling of history in Tel Aviv on May 4, 1949. The first anniversary of Israel as an independent nation found the people in a mood of high holiday. They had come through a difficult period, realized a dream twenty centuries old, won a war, set their feet on the path of international destiny.

The streets of the crowded city were draped with the blue and white flags of the new Jewish state. Men, women and children paraded, danced and sang.

The government proclaimed these first twelve months as "a year of wonders." The official announcement said: "Let the people meet in joyful assembly to offer thanksgiving. Let them honor the fallen and unite in lofty brotherhood. For on this day Israel celebrates the festival of the new freedom."

The city, the nation, and Jews throughout the world rejoiced in the reality of the ancient longing

for a homeland. Yet, beneath the surface of the ringing words and pride was an almost grim note.

Said the nation's leading banker:

"Nineteen forty-nine will be a hard year. With some luck and a generous contribution from Jews abroad we can more or less attain our immigration target. But at the same time this can be reached only if (and it is a big if) we reduce our consumption to a level considerably lower than at present. In addition we must make a real effort to increase productivity.

"To tell the public that it can even improve its standard of living in the near future whilst bringing in hundreds of thousands of immigrants is grossly and irresponsibly misleading."

ISRAEL is a nation facing gigantic problems at the beginning of its second year of life, yet facing them with a faith and determination that is one of the moving spectacles of our age. It was to learn this, to see at first hand the life and spirit of this people, that we had come to this historic land.

It was fitting that we should be in Tel Aviv on the nation's first birthday. That morning we had special invitations to attend services in the great synagogue.

Traffic was at a standstill as pedestrians took over the streets. It seemed that the whole countryside had jammed into the city for the great occasion.

It was a strenuous task to fight our way through the crowd around the synagogue. It took the assistance of the military to get us into the building.

The sight was unforgettable. Every seat was taken. According to orthodox custom women were forbidden to mingle with the men and looked on from the galleries, two or three floors above. The cantor, brought over from London for this event, chanted the services in a moving voice.

Hundreds were standing in the rear and those in front suffered from the eager ones who tried to jam closer. Talk was incessant and applause punctuated the sermon of Rabbi Unterman.

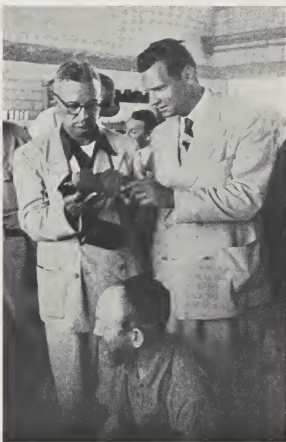
All the high government officials were present except the President, who was in the United States on an important mission. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion helped officiate. He was a striking figure in his frock coat and silk top hat.

This, in a way, was the high point of the crowded day—the assembly of the people and their leaders in the temple of God. The theme of this meeting was joy and determination, thanksgiving and rededication.

Later, Ben-Gurion spoke to the nation by radio. His words were grave. "There is needless waste of property and effort, of manpower and of time. We enjoy luxuries which do not benefit us. There is exaggerated profit, there is profiteering which is destroying the economy and our public spirit.

"It is imperative to bring a halt to all this, imperative for each one of us individually and imperative to the state which has to bear the heavy burden of defense and even heavier burden of absorbing mass immigration."

Israel has made amazing progress, through unbelievable personal sacrifice, during its first year of life. It faces tremendous problems undismayed and unafraid.



Judge Holt and Rev. Reuben K. Youngdahl examine shoes made by children in the Mizrahi home at Raanana.

Judge Holt's article is reprinted from "The Miami Herald" of July 11 and 16, 1949. From July 11 to 17, 1949, "The Miami Herald" carried a series of articles on the Judge's impressions of Israel, as told by him to Bert Collins, staff writer.

A Day in the Negev

ONE visits the Negev in southern Palestine and learns in hours why the Jews of Israel fought desperately to hold it and concentrated diplomatic resources to establish their claim.

It is Israel's expansion area, the base of their hope for future agricultural growth.

Almost two million acres in extent, burned by the sun, with soil apparently second grade, the Negev is in the shape of a triangle stretching toward Egypt. In the Negev is land enough, if irrigated, to fulfill the forecast of a five million population in Israel.

There have been living in the Negev during past years only about 80,000 Bedouins, swarthy and dark, nomadic by long habit, moving their black tents from one desert spot to another, knowing nothing of soap and as little of a bath.

Over the Negev the tides of battle recently rolled and the evidences are still to be seen.

But instead of repeating history that is already told, let me tell of our day in the Negev.

It began with a briefing by Capt. Peytan (whose name means "poet"), speaking in purist Oxford English.

There is a crossroad that leads from the sea and trends toward Jerusalem. Before the fighting actually started, by one of those half-armed, half-comradely truces which the Western mind with difficulty understands, this road was used for six hours by the Arabs, six hours by the Jews, and so on. We followed for a while this main road to Jerusalem, then turned toward Gaza of Biblical fame and Beersheba where Abraham dug his wells.

Our cars turned from the highway, and after proper presentation of credentials by Capt. Peytan, were let into the desert barracks of the army of the Negev defense.

A young fellow—ruddy, vigorous, friendly—came with hand out-stretched in welcome. He was Col. Yigal Alon, chief in the Negev. It was no surprise to learn that his surname means "oak."

At his side, as the interview began in the long room equipped with benches, which was the head-

quarters office, was the second in command, Lt. Col. Rabin, another ruddy, clear-eyed youth who, like his commander, did not appear to have passed his twentieth birthday.

Question: How did so young a man rise to such high command?

Answer: There must have been a lack of choice.

Question: The Egyptian soldiers, were they good fighters?

Answer: The Egyptians had a standardized army and were not expert in using the advantages in their hands. The Egyptians didn't believe; they didn't know what the fighting was about.

Question: What about the Jewish soldier as a fighting man?

Answer: He had a clear choice to fight or die. The general average was high. In the army units there was close co-operation between officers and men and an absence of class distinction. The officers wore no distinguishing marks. This was for protection if captured, as well as to emphasize the democratic character of the Haganah (army of defense). The Jewish fighting men did know what it was all about. They were fighting for a nation; they were fighting for a faith.

Every officer in the army of the Negev had risen from a private.

"What," I asked Col. Alon, the oak, "will you do when your military service is ended?"

"I will return," he said, "to my kibbutz and farm."

One of the criticisms leveled at the Jewish soldiers was that they didn't conform to the rules.

"We hadn't time to learn the rules," said the Negev commander. "Winning was our job."

One story we were told of the disregard for rules had to do with a fight where the Arabs were established on a hill, a commanding position.

The Jews mounted a pole of the proper size and length upon a tractor and pointed it up to the hill as though it were a rapid-fire gun. As the tractor noisily clanked its way upward with that black pole menacing them, the Arabs fled.

In another instance, it was desired to give an impression of motorized strength with armored

cars. The feat was accomplished with three cars—by painting them a different color once every hour.

The Haganah never did have much of an air force. Down in the Negev it consisted once of two small planes. We saw the planes.

THE Negev, as we traveled onward, was a wide plain rolling like the waves of the ocean. The first camel loomed ahead. On his hump was seated the most wide-smiling, devil-may-care young fellow one could ever see outside the United States where camels are not customarily beasts of burden. Swung on the slopes of the high-headed and haughty beast were big canvas sacks—laundry being transported from the settlement of Beeroth Itzhak to the settlement of Niram.

"The camel has no name," his driver said. "He has not been naturalized."

The animal had been abandoned by the Arabs in their flight.

Thus to Beersheba. High above other buildings rose the mosque of Islamic faith. On the border stood the second large building—a school.

The noon hour had come. Lunch was spoken of. We were led into a room and placed at tables. The room was full. Some were sun-blackened, sand-bitten Bedouin desert wanderers, heads and necks covered by grayed kaffiyas, and some were Jewish boys and girls without uniforms, mingling on terms of the greatest freedom and chattering away like magpies.

Governor HANEGBI received us in a bare building where, nonetheless, we would have been happy to linger. Its thick walls maintained coolness. The day had become stifling outside. By some miracle, most of the flies were also excluded.

Governor Hanegbi came from the village of Negba and would also return to farm and make a home when official duties ended.

Beersheba, he said, will be the metropolis of the reclaimed Negev. The town once had fifty thousand inhabitants. Now it is populated by a bare one hundred families. The Negev will yet support a population of 200,000 families. It will grow, not citrus fruits, but grain, vegetables, olives, grapes, plums, figs, pomegranates and almonds.

The well Abraham is reputed to have dug, we found both wide and deep, its water far below clear and cold. But with scaffolding above it for pumping, imagination was hard put to reproduce the ancient flocks and herds and the servants of

the patriarch moving about in their flowing robes.

Far more moving was the visit to nearby and tiny Beth Eshel. Here a cooperative community had dwelt and tilled the land under the very shadow of Beersheba when that town was populated by Arabs. Here the people, farmers not fighters, had held out, digging deeper and deeper into the ground until the walls of their homes had been leveled and until nearly all were dead.

No soul lives now in Beth Eshel. But working to salvage some of the removable doors and windows was a slender, overalled man.

"My name," he said, "is Fred Bitterman. I came from Montreal, and took my degree of master of arts from the University of Toronto. My training is in economics. We are gathering what can be used again. Our problems are two—the winning of the land and the normalizing of our lives.

"Yes," concluded this Canadian economist simply, "I shall stay. Here is my home, my future."

We traveled on to Negba, which it will take a lot of mingling with other scenes ever to forget.

Standing on the hill is the British-built police fortress, Irak Sudan. From it the Arabs fired 30,000 shells upon the village of Negba below, ripping through homes, school and water tank. On the tank derrick one of the community always stood watch, although his predecessor, in instance after instance, was brought in a corpse.

In a hospital built underground, to be entered only by crouching, 350 wounded were cared for; a hundred major operations were performed.

Even the trees had been stripped and riddled. But life was beginning again. In the community dining room, formerly a school, supper was being served—clabbered milk, fish, coarse bread and coffee.

IF THE Negev is to bloom like the rose, it will be from tapping underground water and leading the Jordan away from its age-old channel into the Dead Sea.

It will be a reproduction of another Columbia Basin irrigation project, aided by science.

But, more than all, it will be because of the intense and mystic purpose of an ex-refugee people, gathered from concentration camps, determined to be free.

Mr. Dana's article appeared originally in the Portland "Oregon Journal" of June 25, 1949, as one of a series on his impressions of his trip to Israel.

Tomorrow's Israel

IT was May Day when the plane which had brought us across the Mediterranean came to a stop on the runway of the airport at Lydda. Our first sight of Eretz Israel had been the sand dunes along the coast below Jaffa, but as we flew over the barren sand the green valleys and gardens around Rehovoth came in sight, providing a visual symbol of the paradox that is Israel: on the one hand the desert of the Negev, the rocky hillsides of Galilee and the barren uplands of Judea, burned by the sun and scorched by the Khamsin, and on the other hand, those soils with their potential harvests unlocked by the life-giving water and brought into fruition by the skill and struggle of the pioneers. A visual symbol, too, of the long and tragic history of the land and its people, from the deserts of the Diaspora to the flowering of the homeland into the new state.

As we drove from the airport at Lydda into Tel Aviv and through the crowded traffic of its streets we found another evidence of the emergence of the new from the old and got our first sight of the accent on youth which characterizes every avenue of life in Israel, for on that May Day we watched the parade of thousands of workers from farm and factory and from the citrus groves. As the thousands marched by with the flags of Israel and the banners of labor flying above them, the ranks, almost without exception, were made of boys and girls in their teens, or young men and women in their early twenties. I did not know then that I was seeing the end result of a considered national policy which takes the deep family concern of the Jew and welds it into an instrument of national development that concentrates on children and youth for the development of the economy of the future. I was later to find that everywhere in Israel the most thoughtful and loving care is given to children; they are cherished and protected with patient attention. If, in the midst of urgent and pressing international problems, amid war and destruction, and even while building a complete new economy, the many-faceted mind of Israel can be said to be centered in any one focus, that focus is its children and growing youth.

This is no surprise. The tenacity with which the Jew has maintained his own home and family life through the ages has been, perhaps, the greatest contributory cause in his survival. In the bitter story of Central and Eastern Europe in our own immediate memory, so many family circles were broken and so many wanderers left naked and alone that the first and most desperate need, along with food and shelter, was for a family and babies and the re-establishment of a home.

This universal heart-wringing need for children and the restored family circle, pushes its way into the attention of every visitor to Tel Aviv. The sidewalks are thronged with children, in groups of eight or ten, or hand in hand with grandmothers, or pushed in gleaming chromium-trimmed perambulators by proud mothers. These are children whose faces are round and whose eyes are bright, and who show hardiness and health in every age group. The sheer abundance of babies is unbelievable. Dozens of crib-shaped baby carriages, on low wheels, cluster on every street corner, as mothers of every conceivable national background come out into the air of a free land to give their babies a place in the sun. And on the Sabbath, behind every baby carriage, there is a father or grandfather, bearded or shaven, blonde or brunette. Under the trees along the Keren Kayemet Boulevard the fathers walk their children, and even the most casual passerby must be conscious that here is re-established a continuity of culture which was disrupted and nearly destroyed in the concentration camps. In the shining eyes of those babies is tomorrow's Israel.

ONE of my most poignant memories comes from the reception center for Displaced Persons just south of Haifa. As we walked down the dust-deep road between the wooden barracks crowded with refugees who had only the day before come off the ships at Haifa, a curious throng crowded about us and asked questions of us in polyglot tongues. While others in our group stayed to answer the questions, I stepped aside a few paces until I came to a row of tents crowded beyond



These are some of the children at the Mizrahi Children's Village in Raanana.

belief with men, women and children who were in Israel but still behind the wire fences. At the end of the row of tents was a single water tap and holding a bucket under its meager flow there stood a refugee girl, scarcely out of her babyhood, whose emaciated arms seemed scarcely strong enough to support the bucket. The suffering and struggle of years were written across the narrow and pinched face, and the single garment of sleazy yellow cloth that hung from her shoulders was scarcely long enough to cover her hips. She was the very nadir of underprivilege.

The complement to this picture is one we saw at Raanana, a few kilometers north of Tel Aviv. There, in the children's village supported by the Mizrahi (Orthodox Zionist) Women of America, we found two hundred and sixty refugee children varying in age from five to sixteen years. Living in concrete buildings, with red tile roofs, amid landscaped slopes and blooming flower-beds, bright-eyed and happy children ran to and fro, the bloom of health on their faces, laughter lilting their voices, all friendliness and eager interest. I walked into the spotless dormitories, where furniture and personal belongings were kept in meticulous order, where bright flowers stood on the tables and bright pictures hung on walls. A supervisor and teacher together handled each building, the supervisor living with the boys in the boys' wing and the teacher taking her place with the girls in their area. In order that these children, who, only a few short

months ago were drawing water in their turn from the tap at the reception center, might be set down in the nearest possible approximation to family life, all age groups were represented in each dormitory, with the older children taking responsibility for the younger and the younger learning under the care of the older and the teacher.

Here children who had forgotten or never known all the usages of civilization, were taught again to eat with knives and forks, to sleep in beds, to trust the provision of food for tomorrow, and to expect friendliness and care instead of persecution and danger. Here these children were led into an appreciation of beauty, first by the order and neatness of their buildings, then by the flowering profusion of the lawns and garden, then by guidance in the selection of their own clothing and ornaments and finally and mostly by an outpouring of affection and kindness. In the schools and shops boys and girls learned trades and occupations which they would later use. Jochanan, the shoemaker, pegged away at his last, while a dozen apprentices watched his every movement. In a machine shop boys learned the use of calipers and micrometers as they worked at the lathe and the milling machine. The girls worked at sewing and mending, at laundry and cooking, and cared for the poultry and the vegetable garden.

At mid-day we sat down with these two hundred and sixty orphans of the storm in their screened dining pavilion. All was order and quiet, with the subdued hum of happy, whispered conversation around the table. Across from me sat two thirteen year old Hungarian girls, lovely to look upon. With the help of a sixteen year old who sat at the head of the table and acted as hostess, I was able to carry on a brief conversation with them and found that they had lost parents and friends before the invasion of Normandy took place. As they passed the fragrant dark bread along the table my eyes fell upon their upper forearms, and on each was tattooed a string of numbers. As I looked into their eager, young faces it was clear that no shadow of that ghastly experience clouded the swift play of interest and amusement across their features. The meal over, a young Moroccan blessed God for the fruit of the earth and the children poured out of the dining hall and over the playing field. There a few minutes later I saw the gay faces of the two little Hungarians as they sang and stamped in the rhythm of the hora dance.

The physicians at Raanana and later at the

Youth Aliyah reception center at Onim, in answer to my query, pointed out how infrequent were cases of real, deep-seated neuroses among the youthful survivors of the concentration camps. Youth is resilient under whatever tragedies, and these children had found care, security, understanding, medical treatment, good food and wholesome surroundings, and had come out into carefree and alert childhood. How precious that result is to the future of Israel, how dearly bought with sacrifice and love on the part of those who have made it possible!

THE story of the change between the condition of children as they come into Israel from all the areas of persecution and those same children as they have found new life in the new land is a story of many separated incidents that blend into a single impression. Whether it was a little English-speaking boy from Teheran whose eyes sparkled and whose face lighted up as he talked about the younger brother in whom he had obvious pride; or the quiet girl from Algiers who said to me, "In Algiers we had everything; here we have nothing but freedom; for the first time in my life, here I am happy"; or the ten year old girl at Shefeya who played the balalaika and sang haunting Slavic songs; or the classroom full of boys seated cross-legged upon the floor as they intoned their lessons from the Torah; everywhere children are the focus of the attention of Israel.

Schools are everywhere. In Tel Aviv crowds of shouting, playing children thronged the schoolyard of one of the most modern schools I have ever seen. Among the ruins of Jaffa, we looked in through an open door and saw a class of boys repeating the lessons lined out to them by a tall bearded teacher in a caftan. In every kibbutz, in every moshav, classroom instruction was in progress, from elementary subjects up to the general sciences.

When the story of the establishment of the new state of Israel is written, the story of the part played by boys and girls, in the events leading up to the termination of the Mandate and the prosecution of the war will stand out in bold letters. In many places the majority of the defenders of the Kibbutzim were boys and girls who fought side by side with their elders against overwhelming odds. The campaigns in Galilee and the Negev were carried on for the most part by youngsters in their teens or early twenties, under the command of officers of their own age. Colonel Yigal

Alon, who commanded in Galilee and on the southern front, and Lieutenant Colonel Izhak Rabin, his second in command, were both under thirty years of age. The Palmach, of whom it was said, "Every member knew what all were fighting for, and no unit ever gave up a foot of ground as long as one man still remained standing," was an organization in which nearly every able-bodied youth served as a volunteer, and in which young men and women of seventeen and eighteen years of age took the brunt of the fighting. Here was a real youth movement, spending two or three weeks working in agricultural settlements, then a week in military training, then dropping the rifle for the hoe, until attack came. When war came the Palmach was the best organized and trained military force in the country, and these shock troops of boys and girls may have been the weight that shifted the balance between defeat and victory.

Through the last forty years, as those who planned for the return to Zion saw the need for an agricultural base in the economy of Israel, every effort has been made to direct the attention of the youth toward the land. The ideal of the Halutz, the agricultural pioneer, has been held up as the great ideal for youth. The pioneer who sets up a Deganya at the outfall of the Jordan or a Beth Eshel beyond Beersheba is, in the last analysis, the man who will make Israel a viable state. The tractors and plows that open up the Negev, bring irrigating waters to the desert, are the instruments of destiny in the Middle East. And these instruments are in the hands of the young men and women who have been loved in the homes, taught in the schools, trained in the Kibbutzim, and are now tomorrow's Israel.

They are a kind of young people who represent something new in the world's long-standing conception of the Jew. To begin with, they are sturdy of body, muscular and vigorous, with arms and backs toughened by outdoor labor, eyes accustomed to watching of the far hills for signs of weather changes or the movements of potential enemies; minds, too, toughened by the grim struggle with a difficult terrain or with the need to out-think and outlast that same potential enemy.

It was these growing youth, born in Israel, or immigrants from all over the world, now marching toward the future in one united phalanx, shoulders back and heads erect in the pride of their new homeland, whom we saw swinging down the streets of Tel Aviv when we came in from Lydda on May Day morning.

This I Have Witnessed

TO HAVE gone forth to see Israel, and return, is to have been honored with the role of star witness at the tribunal of humanity. In some distant future when historians reclassify the great events of the world, I am sure that the declaration of the independence of Israel will be added to the list which now encompasses the Magna Carta, the American Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights.

As I stood on my balcony at the Yarden Hotel on Ben Yehuda Street on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Independence of Israel, I noticed a middle-aged mother with a year-old child in her arms, waiting patiently on the street to watch in awe a parade to mark the historic passing of one year of existence of their new found home. They waited for hours and hours. As each hour passed, I was more and more impressed with the stamina which kept this mother and this child so devotedly at their post. This was not just another parade. It was a parade of emotions. While this mother and child waited and watched, thousands of others did likewise. They sat on roof tops, in windows, as many others danced the Hora and danced in the streets. They carried on in each of their hearts a private little parade of joy, after the years of sorrow and hardship, malnutrition and everpresent death in the camps of Europe. The groundswell of patience and the groundswell of spirit spelled out vividly in my mind the entire spirit of the people of Israel.

This, too, I have witnessed:

We here are so accustomed to the regular routine of civil life in our community, that it is difficult for us to grasp the significance of the fact that, in a short twelve months, a people has been able to transform a disorganized civil government handed to them reluctantly by the British, into a smoothly operating, efficient and self-sacrificing government. I have spoken to David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, Gershon Agronsky, Rabbi J. L. Fishman, and also to many of the lesser employees of the civil government. I have heard from their lips the story of how diligently they are working to improve the machinery of government on all

its levels to one end—that the government itself shall be completely democratic, and shall represent the dignity of man.

This I testify:

Jews and Arabs are living together in peace and harmony. Some of the Arabs—about 160,000—remained loyal to the new government. One such group is in the village of Abu Ghosh on the high-road from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. We called on the mukhtar, or mayor, of this village who received us with the embarrassing Arab hospitality which cannot be refused. When he learned that I was mayor of a city in America he was delighted and presented me with a kaffiya, the traditional and picturesque Arab headdress. Later, high in the Carmel range in the north, back of Haifa, I visited and talked with the chief of a village of Druse who not only had remained loyal, but who showed me a trophy cup presented to him by the Israel police for his cooperation.

I HAVE witnessed the coming of the life blood of Israel—its new citizens. I remember one morning on the dock at Haifa. I approached a group just debarking from one of the improvised transport boats. I witnessed the tears of joy from the Israeli who were on hand to greet them and shepherd them to their inland locations—to start life anew in the one nation in the world which forever will have a sign on its gate, "Welcome—this is your land—make it your home."

We also visited reception centers for the new immigrants, who are screened before being sent to such camps as those at Nathanya where they remain until jobs and housing are found for them.

We visited the Mizrahi Children's Village at Raanana, a model and impressive community with children from all over the world—children who were unwanted in other parts of the world—who came to Israel to be loved and cared for and raised and taught to be the future citizens of a new standard-bearer of democracy in the Near East. As I wandered through the village of children, I stopped to watch a group of boys being taught the craft of shoe repairing. The more I watched, the

more interested I became in the instructor of the group. He was, I soon learned, a rabbi who, in addition to his religious duties at the school, was devoting some of his time to the material necessities of training these youths for useful life in Israel. And so it is throughout the nation. Everybody is doing more than one job. All their abilities and talents are unrelentingly being devoted to the common purpose of a greater and stronger Israel.

The Junior Hadassah Children's Village at Meier Shfeya high in the foothills of the Carmel is, like the Mizrahi village, a great factor in the humane work of rebuilding a generation of lost children.

I have seen Tel Aviv and Haifa: Tel Aviv, the temporary capital and the metropolis of the new state, is growing like a frontier town. It is a city of apartments with all the advantages and drawbacks of such an arrangement. But the city of the future is Haifa which bids fair to become the greatest port on the Mediterranean. It climbs tier upon tier up the side of the Carmel range and will spread far back inland as it grows not only as a commercial center, but as the seat of Israeli industry and terminus of the Iraq oil pipe line.

I HAVE also witnessed our diplomatic service in action, or to put it bluntly, lack of action! I must report to you that our very responsible group of eleven non-Jews on this study tour of Israel were not permitted to visit the Old City of Jerusalem. The facts behind this peculiar incident are worthwhile hearing. Imagine a situation where a group of Christians, travelling with passports granted by the State Department of the United States, are refused permission to enter the citadel of Christianity. This refusal was suffered because of lack of action on the part of the American Consul in Jerusalem. We could do no more than view the Old City, held by the Arab Legion, from the roof of the Hospice of Notre Dame de Zion, some distance away, and under the vigilance of two opposing armies.

On May 10th our group sent the following telegram to Honorable William Burdette, at the United States Consulate at Jerusalem:

We are deeply disturbed and disappointed with lack of cooperation from your office in facilitating our visit to Old City of Jerusalem. We consider such visit of primary importance in connection with our study tour of Palestine. If our wishes are unfulfilled will return to United States with a sense of great frustra-

tion. We leave Israel Sunday, May 15th, and are ready to cross lines Saturday, May 14th. We await your reply today, May 10, at Hotel Yarden Tel Aviv, or tomorrow May 11, by telegram at Hotel Lev Carmel Haifa lunchtime, or Thursday, May 12, at Hotel Galei Kinereth Tiberias.

Subsequently the Arab officials found it expedient to "consider" the matter so long that the study group could not make the trip. Further the American officials refused to act effectively on the request, and our chance to visit the shrines and talk with the Arabs holding the city was lost. What a contrast to the position of the Israeli government which has consistently maintained that the city of Jerusalem should be open to people of all religions and that its shrines should be maintained for everyone.

THE grandeur of Biblical times, the color of the Arabian nights, the excitement of new experiences amid awe-inspiring scenery and the overwhelming sense of future greatness displayed by an earnest and energetic people—these are the impressions of Israel that left an indelible mark on me.

An American is impressed by the similarities between accounts of colonial times in his own land and the problems of the Israeli government and people. One of the seeming contradictions is that this land, probably the oldest in history, is at the same time so new, so filled with the elements of pioneering and of the frontier. The reason is to be found in the fact that there are no recent traditions. The Arabs and the Turks came in after the Diaspora. While the Jews have a history of continuous occupancy of the Holy Land, their real traditions were maintained outside, while the intruders reduced the "land of milk and honey" to an eroded wasteland.

Now all these centuries of losses are being retrieved in a lifetime. The enormity of the task staggers us Americans who are somewhat proud of our accomplishments, our ability to overcome natural and other obstacles. This we did because we had time as well as determination. The Israelis are deprived of time. But I who have seen them, know that the determination of the people of Israel will surmount all obstacles and Israel within a short time will become one of the great nations of the world.

The Major Problems

THE eyes of the world are turned toward Israel today. That is as it should be. Anyone who is interested in world events, international affairs, the United Nations, and the problems of human welfare, is naturally interested in the newest nation and how it shall fare. And, it can be said, also, that every such person has an opinion about Israel, its chances to succeed, based upon whatever knowledge or information he has been able to gather.

I had my opinions, skeptical as they were, although nonetheless hopeful that Israel might succeed in establishing a free and independent democratic government, at peace with its neighbors, and allowed to develop agriculturally, industrially, economically, and culturally sufficient to meet the great needs and challenges confronting it. I say "skeptical" because Israel is confronted with almost insurmountable problems. As one studies her problems "on paper", her future seems almost hopeless. If she is to persist steadfastly in the ideals and goals she has set for herself, only a super-human effort can make her solvent.

But, there is a difference between opinion based on "paper knowledge" and that which is the result of seeing and studying firsthand the great adventures under way in Israel. There is the human factor, the difference between success and failure, which one does not see "on paper." I saw Israel last May (1949). And, although I was able to see that the problems were even greater than I had known, I was able also to get the feel of the people, to experience their unlimited energy, drive, and enthusiasm, and to see almost unbelievable, fully developed accomplishments, the results of the past twenty-five years.

So far as I know, very few of the eleven in our Study Tour group met before joining on this project. We learned early in our trip that if we were to accomplish anything, we would have to subscribe to one agreement, that each was entitled to complete the sentence he had begun before being interrupted. It was not the type of group for which a "conducted tour" would prove satisfying or adequate. And in no sense was it a

tour in which others determined what we should see or whom we should interview. Each had his own ideas. Nor were we the type that could have been induced to take such a trip for propaganda purposes. Except for the newspaper writers, we had no obligation to anyone to do anything about, or with, the information gathered. Our sole obligation was to make the most of our opportunity to see and learn what potentialities and possibilities there are in Israel. And, having been there, I am certain that fifteen days in Israel does not make me or anybody else an expert on Israel.

However, May 1 to May 15 was an historic time to be in Israel. The first year of independence was celebrated on May 4. On May 11 Israel was admitted to membership in the United Nations. Great was the celebrating and rejoicing throughout Israel. So many people came into the centers of population to attend patriotic meetings and to watch parades on May 4, that in almost every city planned programs and parades gave way to the enthusiasm of the throngs; nothing went off as scheduled. It was a spontaneous release of pent-up emotions, officially marking the passing of Israel's first great crisis.

THERE will be other crises, perhaps one after another for at least the next five or six years. The people of Israel will have to make progress against a constantly continuing accumulation of more and more intensified problems. After their victory in war and their admission, as an established nation, to the fellowship of the peace-loving nations of the world, they must find ways to channel their energies toward the satisfaction of even more difficult needs. They must establish peace and trade relations with their immediate neighbors, the seven Arab states. They must develop and stretch their economy so as successfully to absorb and rehabilitate the incoming flood of immigrants, immigrants coming out of seventy different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in all quarters of the earth. They must swiftly accomplish economic stability by means of foreign loans, gifts, and favorable trade agreements.

Any one of these three major problems is enough to discourage an average or mediocre people. But, here again, it is the human factor which spells the difference between hopeful prospects and dismal hopelessness. The people of Israel are not mediocre nor just average. I frankly believe, from what I saw, that there is more genius concentrated in Israel today than in any comparable area on earth. I am not basing this judgment upon their aggregation of scientific and intellectual leaders in the fields of scholarship, but rather upon the intellectual keenness and know-how of the man in the street, the taxi driver, the farmer, the laborer, the religious leader, and the man in government. Nobody that I saw was "letting any grass grow under his feet." Spare time, marginal time, was invariably turned into creative and constructive activities. Everybody seemed to have an urge to learn more and better ways of doing things. I haven't yet caught up with their expression, "an educated and producing peasantry." The progressive schools and well stocked libraries which we found on farm settlements were indicative to me of what the future holds for Israel.

Can you imagine 800,000 people trying to keep pace with the problems of rehabilitating and absorbing 1,000 new immigrants a day, 300,000 a year? The Israeli government has reiterated its determination to retain its open-door policy on immigration and keep faith with all who wish to create a new life and home in Israel. There were 60,000 immigrants in reception camps when we were in Israel. There are approximately 80,000 at this date. An austerity program which involved strict rationing was legislated while we were there. Almost unbelievable as it is that any nation could be so generous, the strict Israeli rationing of food does not apply to those who are in the process of being rehabilitated in the reception camps and centers. The Israeli simply say that "those people need all the food we can give them if they are to become strong and healthy enough to establish themselves successfully."

In my book, it requires considerably more courage, fortitude, and sacrificial endurance to win this struggle for the absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, than it did to win the war against the seven Arab nations. Some of us flatly called the effort national suicide. The Israeli answer is indicative of the human factor one does not see on paper. "Need creates resources," they told us. I have given that a lot of thought since my visit there. It means that the thousands of immi-

grants themselves are both the need and the resources out of which the needs will be met. And, it means more: that, being human, people simply don't put forth their best productive effort until and unless they are on the spot. So, the Israeli have simply put themselves "on the spot", have deliberately pressed themselves against the wall, compelling themselves to use resources within themselves which might otherwise be unused. I myself, as I rethink it, don't do much that I don't have to do. "Need creates resources" is a daring and admirable philosophy. Only a courageous people, a believing and self-sacrificing people would launch a new nation on such a policy.

ECONOMIC stability in Israel cannot always be dependent upon outside help or favor. The Israeli know that. They will need about six billion dollars from the outside in the next six years, we were told, and the sum is expected to come from favorable loans, private investments, trade agreements, and grants. Why does it cost so much? More land must be reclaimed, made productive. Industries must be established and expanded. Houses and whole communities must be built from the ground up. In terms of the future, Israel is a new land; it is a new frontier; pioneering efforts are seen on every hand.

Today's employment pattern finds about 25 per cent of the population in industry and 15 per cent in agriculture. We were told that it is hoped to interest at least 25 per cent in agriculture and that both agriculture and industry must continue to absorb about this ratio to keep pace with their productive needs.

Although Israel's approximately four hundred farm settlements vary as much as individuals, only about sixty are villages of private farmers of a sort more or less familiar to us, while the rest can be classified under three general types: Kibbutz, Moshav, and Moshav-Shitufi, all of them on nationally-owned land.

The Kibbutz is the collective, communal farm settlement where no one owns anything, but all is owned and operated collectively. Children are housed by age levels, separately from their parents.

The Moshav is a small-land-holders' farm settlement operated by individual family units, in which the large-scale farming, the buying and marketing are done cooperatively.

The Moshav-Shitfi is the latest type developed, a combination of the other two, in that it is a collective with individual family living.

Some industries are organized on the collective pattern. Other industries are built on a private enterprise pattern. Industry is probably capable of even more varied types of expansion and discovery than is true of agriculture. In fact, the farm settlements themselves strive for self-sufficiency by developing their own industries around their needs and productive capacities. The treatment of citrus is typical. Nothing is wasted except what evaporates in the process. Canned orange, grapefruit, and lemon juices are the first product; then, certain oils from the skins and seeds are processed and used in extracts, condiments, a perfume base, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics; finally, there is fodder and fertilizer. Citrus fruit juices share with tea the distinction of being Israel's most favored drink. Very little liquor and wine is drunk.

One of the most significant elements in the building of Israel's economy is the Weizmann Institute of Science. Exceptionally well equipped with a professional staff of about forty and a technical staff of about one hundred and twenty, the Institute's work is both pure science and applied science, organic and physical chemistry. Besides studying and developing processes in soil conser-

vation, discovering the interplay of atmospheric conditions in agricultural and health projects, the Institute is specializing in the fields of optics, plastics, synthetics, pharmaceuticals, rubber, and fermentation. Like all of Israel, the Weizmann Institute feels an urgent need to hurry. "We have no time," its director says, "but at least by scientific research and application, we are shortening the time needed."

Invariably I am asked if I saw conditions of misery or unbearable hardship in Israel. I have wondered myself about the optimism I feel so strongly. Of course, there were heart-breaking scenes, many, many situations which you and I would call unbearable. But, as I rethink them, I remember that the hardships involved were submerged by the spirit of those who had to bear them—a kind of determination and enthusiasm to conquer the land, to drive out the wastes, and to build. One woman put it this way, "We are drunk with a new sense of freedom and of opportunity which we have never known before."

For hundreds of thousands, even millions, Israel is a land of opportunity to establish a home, a way of life, a democracy of human freedoms.



Members of the Study Tour group survey the destruction wrought by Arab fighters in an old Jewish section of Jaffa—Baal Shem Tov Street, the borderline between Tel-Aviv and Jaffa.

The Arab Exodus

FOR TWO WEEKS we visited cities and settlements, Arab villages and market places, mosques and museums, scientific institutes and schools. We interviewed the ministers of health, labor, religion and foreign affairs, talked with citizens about refugees, art, agriculture, social security and all other aspects of life in Israel.

One moment we would be climbing over ancient ruins which are the archeologists' delight and then perhaps in a short time would be inspecting a modern factory where tapuchei zahav ("golden apples" or oranges) are processed. The rapidity with which we were introduced to the new and old in which Israel abounds, often brought a discomforting feeling of mental indigestion.

I heard the magnificent Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra playing Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 3 in F major and other classical works, with Paul Poiret of Paris conducting. So many persons want to hear the orchestra that each program is given six times in order to accommodate the crowds.

All Israelis don't go in for "longhaired" entertainment however, for queues form nightly before movie houses where Danny Kaye and Betty Grable are starred. And dancing on the boardwalk to such well-worn favorites as *A Slow Boat to China* is another after-dark pastime.

A converted sea-front movie theater in Tel Aviv now houses the Knesset or parliament of Israel. We heard this body debate the austerity program one evening. It was my good fortune to sit next to Mrs. Dov Joseph, wife of the Minister of Supplies, who interpreted for me the spirited discussion on the plan submitted by her husband to fight the high cost of living.

Rigid curbs, later put into effect, regulate the flow and price of imported goods as well as the production costs and prices of locally produced commodities. There is no shopping around in Israel. Every buyer has coupons which are good only at stores to which he is assigned and every seller is provided, by the government, with a list of customers to whom he can sell.

With food standards comparable to those set up

in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, which furnish only the minimum caloric count or vitamin content necessary to health, there are no banquets to share. But despite the food restrictions, hearty hospitality is offered by people of every social and economic level.

We broke bread with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion at a delightful garden party celebrating Israel's first year of independence; with Mahmud Rashid Abu Ghosh, the Mukhtar of the Arab village of Abu Ghosh, who set out fifty odd dishes of fruit, candy and cigarets and then apologized because he didn't know we were coming. We had tea and cakes at the lovely villa of James McDonald, American ambassador to Israel, at the home of Gershon Agronsky, publisher of the English-printed *Palestine Post*, and were received by mayors, government officials, farmers, engineers and other lesser lights.

Everywhere one goes during business or social hours, either hot tea in tall glasses or tiny cups of Turkish coffee, heavy with herbs, is served. The afternoon tea hour, incidentally, is observed as religiously here as on the continent. In great contrast to Europe, however, there is no tipping in Israel—for any service.

One item which must not be passed over is our visit to the Weizmann Institute, an imposing new and splendidly equipped laboratory for research in chemistry, bacteriology and plastics. Here in a restful, blonde wood paneled room, graced by the bust of George Washington, we heard Dr. Benjamin Block discuss the Institute's work. He said that agriculture does not feed all of Israel's population and that industry is needed, too. The country is handicapped by lack of coal, iron and other natural resources, but science is attempting to fill in this deficiency. A great number of scientists are working at the Weizmann Institute (a non-profit center in which all income goes to research) to convert the resources of Israel into industries. For example, they manufactured atabrine (a malaria preventive), developed a process for reclaiming rubber from rubber waste, and have processed a castor bean oil plastic to compete with nylon.

Not many miles away we saw Arabs in kaffiyas working the stony fields with crude wooden plows that have survived the hoary centuries. Tractors, modern fertilizers and agricultural aids are unknown to these picturesque peasants. Time, for the Arabs, seemingly has done what it does for no man—stood still.

I COULD go on and on writing about Cadillacs and camels, Arab women with swaying hips balancing jugs of water on their heads or pounding clothes with stones at Canaan's ancient wells, of Crusaders' churches and the dark, zig-zag bazaars of Nazareth and Acre. But I must leave space to write about Israel's most pressing problem which now forms a roadblock to peace—the problem of the Arabs who fled across the borders during the war.

The refugees are variously estimated at 500,000 to 900,000. From David Courtney, a British writer who has given long study to the problem and gone over all the figures, we heard that there cannot be more than 530,000 Arab refugees. This was substantiated by the Quakers who are doing relief work among the deplorable Arab camps outside Israel's boundaries in Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Egypt. We talked with Arabs at Jaffa (the Biblical Joppa from which Jonah departed for Tarshish), at Nazareth, Abu Ghosh and the Druse village of Isfiya; everywhere we tried to find out the truth as to why the Arabs left in frightened droves.

Bit by bit we fitted the story together. One thing is certain: the Arabs were neither driven nor expelled from their homes. They went of their own accord. The Jews at the outbreak of hostilities, "practically went down on their knees" to beg the Arabs to stay. They were told by the Jews, that they had nothing to fear and could live in peace and friendship. The Haganah distributed leaflets in Arabic in all Arab villages in which it urged Arabs to choose "peace and constructive work" and warned the Arabs not to offer bases to warmongers "so that we shall have to harm you and your property in the course of our self-defense." Similar appeals were made by other agencies.

But the Arab radio blasted away day and night, telling the Arabs to leave, assuring them that they could come back in two weeks when the Jews would have been pushed into the sea. Then they could have "all Israel to loot."

The Arab leaders had anticipated a quick vic-

tory over the Jews whom they outnumbered and who had been systematically disarmed by the mandatory power. Arab flight, we heard, was deliberately stimulated by the Arab leaders in order to inflame Arab resentment, to create artificially an Arab refugee problem which could elicit world sympathy and so counter-balance the claims of Jewish refugees, and finally, to prepare the ground for full-scale invasion by the Arab states who could then appear as saviors of their brethren.

One Arab whose name I cannot use because he has relatives among the refugees and fears retaliation, said: "Half the Arabs in Jaffa went in order to stay clear of the fighting." Some were afraid because of the Mufti-inspired propaganda about Jewish cruelties. Some just followed like sheep.

The British encouraged and facilitated the departure of the Arabs, taking them away in boats and motor lorries. Those who fled, leaving behind their unreaped fields and meager belongings, now find themselves the victims of bad advice. The Arabs and Jews, this Jaffa Arab told me, could have lived together and cooperated in business and social life. "Arab leaders got them into a fix and have no plans for a way out," he said.

Unfortunately, the Arab refugee problem is being made a political rather than a humanitarian problem. The plight of the Arabs, touching and regrettable as it is, is being used as a lever to embarrass the Jews. The Israeli-Arab peace talks at Lausanne have been stalemated over this question, for the Arabs will not talk boundaries and the future of Jerusalem until the refugee problem is settled and the Jews say they cannot discuss the refugees until territorial claims are settled.

A spectacle of thousands of homeless human beings naturally arouses world sympathy, but indignant outcries emanating from Arab, British or other sources should not be allowed to obscure the real issue: namely, the Arab exodus was the direct result of Arab aggression, the deliberate flaunting of the U. N. decision to partition Palestine.

Whether the Arabs left through fear or a belief that they would soon return to share the spoils, or as stupid, unquestioning followers of false leaders, they became participants in the attack on Israel. They were vocal or silent partners in a perfidious scheme to "drive the Jews into the sea."

As Michael Cohen, one of our guides, said, "If the Arabs had felt like the Jews do about Israel, they wouldn't have left. If it were from fear, then they hadn't the fighting power."



Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett of Israel (second from right) meets with Study Tour members.

WE LEARNED Israel's official attitude on the Arab refugee problem from Moshe Sharett, Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said Israel is willing to compensate the Arabs for their land which is being held by the commission on abandoned property, but the government cannot jeopardize Israel's future by agreeing to the return of all Arab refugees. Israel does not belittle the humanitarian problem of these displaced Arabs. But neither does it feel the answer to the problem will be found inside the new state.

There are three reasons behind this attitude. One is theoretical, one practical and one political. The first is simple. The Jews are concerned with gathering in their own people and every effort is being made toward the creation of a Jewish homeland, not a minority state. How to absorb their own without upsetting the country's economy is the chief worry of the moment.

The second reason is as definite and clear. Many of the mud and plaster homes the Arabs once occupied have either been demolished in war or razed as part of a slum clearance program. And those houses fit for habitation are not empty and waiting for the Arabs' return. They have been renovated and occupied by Jewish immigrants seeking security and a new life on the soil of their ancestors.

From a political viewpoint, taking the Arab refugees back constitutes an ever-impending danger. The Jews fear fifth columnists among this group, for the Arabs, with pride shattered and

governments weakened, have vowed to get Palestine back if it takes a hundred years. Israel cannot afford to take back thousands who might light the fuse of war at any moment.

Israel's stand that no Arab refugees can be returned to the Jewish state until territorial and security demands are satisfied seems to be well justified. The solution to the problem offered by Israel is resettlement of the Arabs in their own under-populated countries. This would be more feasible both from a political and financial viewpoint than bringing them back to Jewish Palestine. One concession has been offered—the return of relatives so that Arab families divided between Israel and the misery-laden camps can be reunited.

Whatever the answer to this perplexing problem, I feel it is one for the U. N. to grapple with. That assembly permitted the Arabs to defy its decision and thereby create the problem. The solution should not rest in penalizing the Jews by the demand that they assume responsibility for something not of their making.

Meanwhile the world waits for a just solution to this problem which is holding back peace and progress in the entire Middle East.

Mrs. Freese' article appeared originally in the July 10, 1949 issue of the "Sioux City Sunday Journal," which published a series of pieces by her, describing her trip to Israel.

Religion in Israel

IN TEL AVIV I met a waitress who was being taught the meaning of Judaism by an elderly Jew who was a convert from Christianity. Both were from Czechoslovakia. The waitress came from a secularized Jewish family and had never been steeped in the religious traditions of her people. The old gentleman of Christian background had become a Jew when he married a Jewess in the old country. In all earnestness he studied Judaism and became the kind of convert who could lead others to an appreciation of the great heritage of Judaism.

Also in Tel Aviv I met a Christian woman who declared that she had never been a "believing Christian until she saw what the Jews were doing in Palestine." She was profoundly impressed by the courage, the fortitude, of these people who braved death to drain malarial swamplands and to turn back the desert in order to build a homeland for themselves and their persecuted brothers. "Only God could inspire such zeal; God must be back of this development."

These may be strange manifestations of religion in Israel. Yet religion or the spirit of religion has many forms of expression there. It refuses to conform to a simple pattern. An investigator cannot easily give it a statistical evaluation and set the facts into a well organized frame of reference.

Generalizations about religion in Israel are therefore not easily constructed. In the course of my investigation of this subject many basic questions continually occurred to me: "Exactly what is religion?" "Is religion to be confined to some form of institutional expression?" "To what extent is a revival of prophetic religion bound up with the rebellion against ancient forms and ceremonies?" "Is it possible for the Christian accurately to evaluate religious expression in the Jewish community, judging it as he must by criteria he has constructed to evaluate Christian religious manifestations?"

I do not profess to have found the answers to these questions. It is too early in the life of Israel to judge with an air of finality exactly what role religion will play in the life of the new state. That

it is significant is obvious even to the casual observer. Whether its influence will stem from orthodoxy only or whether new forms of Judaism will take root and provide spiritual leaders, is still within the realm of conjecture.

Overt manifestations of religion in Israel are not difficult to see. The Sabbath is very rigidly observed. No comparison is possible between our Sunday and Israel's Sabbath. Public transportation stops, shops close, the streets are quiet and virtually empty. At first I thought a curfew was on! The cinemas are closed. Only a few sidewalk cafes defy the custom and operate as usual — though with few customers. A few taxis also venture forth. Most of the pharmacies are closed. Each week the *Palestine Post* carries a list of those pharmacies which will remain open for emergency purposes.

On Friday night I was privileged to be at the home of Harry Cohen, an ordinary citizen of Israel, who came from Ireland. He now works for the tourist department of the government. Mr. Cohen sang the traditional Friday night prayers and blessed the wine and the bread before we sat down to the meager repast which the citizens of Israel have learned to accept. While we ate, the Bible passage of the week was being chanted over the radio. As I took part in this beautiful family service, I knew that the same ritual was in progress in thousands of other homes in Israel.

ISRAEL is so young that statistics have not been gathered on every aspect of the life of the state. Growth is so rapid that statistics gathered today will be out of date tomorrow. Consequently, it is difficult to answer such questions as "How many synagogues are there in Tel Aviv?" or, "How many members do the orthodox synagogues claim?" According to government officials, there are about three hundred synagogues in Tel Aviv—approximately one for every one hundred people.

As I walked the streets of Tel Aviv Friday nights, I peeked into synagogue after synagogue and found them comfortably filled. It took no reflection to know that the Sabbath had arrived. The prayers and the chanting echoed in the streets.

Figures on the number of religious Jews in Israel are even more difficult to obtain. Some have suggested that the strength of the religious forces in Israel can be judged by the fact that the religious parties polled only 12 per cent of the vote in the January elections. But not all religious Jews voted for the Orthodox parties. Many orthodox Jews voted for Mapai,¹ others supported Heruth² and still others supported various other parties with the exception of the Mapam³ and the Communist parties. The closest estimate obtainable is that 25 per cent of the citizens of Israel are traditional orthodox Jews. That does not mean that the remaining 75 per cent are anti-religious. Indeed, only the Communists might be so considered. Even the Marxist Mapam party is more accurately to be described as non-religious than anti-religious. The majority of the Jews of Israel are religiously sensitive in varying degrees though they do not all accept the dietary and other traditions of Orthodoxy.

From this analysis of religion in Israel it becomes apparent that it is not in striking contrast with the religious picture in America. Approximately 50 per cent of the American people are nominal church members. However, at best only one-third of these attend with any degree of regularity. Thus approximately 17 to 20 per cent of the American people follow the Christian tradition in the devout manner that characterizes the 20 to 25 per cent of the Jews of Israel who follow the rigorous forms of Orthodoxy. Clearly, it cannot be said that "Israel is a nation without God."

Sixteen members of the Knesseth and three cabinet ministers are members of the religious bloc. Other members of the Assembly, belonging to other parties, are also religious. Many in the administrative services are devout Jews. Dr. Leo Kohn, author of the draft constitution, as a religious Jew, attempted to translate the ethical and moral precepts of Judaism into constitutional form. There are those in Jewish circles who complain that the draft constitution is too religious. Milton

Konvitz, writing in *The Reconstructionist* of April 1, 1949, makes this charge. And, indeed, even a cursory reading of this model document will impress the reader with its high spiritual qualities, its dependence upon God, and its close connection with the history of the Jewish people.

THE ACCUSATION that Israel is a secularist nation has frequently arisen from the fact that a good number of the agricultural settlements have no synagogues, make no efforts to follow the religious traditions, and may even boast that they have outgrown religious forms. Christian visitors have often been most impressed by this development in Israel and have made the mistake of generalizing that because the settlements are secular, all Israel is a secularist nation.

The truth is that only some of the settlements are secular. Others have synagogues and kosher kitchens for those wishing to follow the Orthodox tradition. Still others are Orthodox settlements in which Orthodox traditions are followed by the entire community. There are today more than thirty such religious settlements of the collective (kibbutz) and the cooperative smallholder types.

An analysis of the distinctly secular settlements reveal attitudes and values which are strikingly similar to religious precepts and cause one to ask such a basic question as "When is a person religious and when is he distinctly secular?"

In Maabaroth, a secular Mapam kibbutz north of Tel Aviv, I discussed religion with Mr. Leo Silberstein, accountant of the settlement. He said that theirs was a frankly non-religious settlement — which meant that they did not follow the Orthodox traditions and ceremonies. They did observe the Sabbath as "a day of rest and cultural improvement." They taught the Bible in their schools "as history and as literature." And they observed the agricultural festivals of the Bible such as Shevuoth, the Feast of Weeks; Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, etc. But, he insisted, they were not religious. I pressed on with the question, "What do you think of the great principles—I call them religious principles—of justice, brotherhood, service and sacrifice?" "Ah," he replied, "then we speak the same language."

And, indeed, residents of Maabaroth not only believe in these principles but are practicing them. Under their loving and brotherly care, the local Bedouin Arabs had been led to become settled farmers, abandoning their black goat-hair tents and living in houses made of cement blocks. When

¹ Mapai is the largest party in the country and the dominant factor in the present Government. It is moderate Socialist in program.

² Heruth, the "Freedom Party," is the political successor of the Irgun—the dissident, anti-British fighting underground of the last days of the Mandate.

³ Mapam, up to several years ago the left wing of Mapai, is more consistently and aggressively Socialist than Mapai and tends towards an Eastern rather than Western orientation in foreign policy.

the recent Arab war was launched against Israel these Arabs prepared a feast and pledged to the members of Maabaroth that they would remain their friends and not join in any attack. Later these Arabs fled — not out of fear of the Jews of Maabaroth, but out of fear of the Mufti and his ilk who commanded the flight! They wept when they left.

Maabaroth has also taken its share of refugees from Europe. The settlement has welcomed twenty-five old people who obviously are not in a position to make a contribution to its economic development. Seventy families from Europe are there for a year's training in farming and to learn Hebrew. Thirty Youth Aliyah children are also attached to the settlement. All of this is more of a financial drain than an asset. Yet no one looks upon this humanitarian task in materialistic, secular terms. Indeed, the members consider it a privilege to help rebuild the lives of these broken people and give them the hope and purpose which they themselves found only when they came to the Holy Land and began to build their settlement in 1933.

Love, sacrifice, service, brotherhood — all these are being lived in Maabaroth, a "secular" kibbutz. I leave it to the reader to decide whether the average citizen in America — the average religious citizen — lives as intimately with these great principles. Indeed, generalizations concerning religion in Israel cannot lightly be made.

RELIGIOUS sensitivity in Israel is also readily observable when the recent victory over the combined forces of seven Arab nations is discussed. Virtually unanimous is the belief that the victory was a miracle, that it cannot be explained in purely military terms. To be sure, the morale of the Jewish troops was higher than that of the Arabs because the Arabs had nothing to fight for while the Jews had no alternative, no matter how overwhelming the odds against them. But even this fact is not considered sufficient to explain the success of the Israelis.

Stories of miraculous events which occurred during the war can be heard in the settlements. The following are two that were told me at Yavneh, an Orthodox settlement south of Tel Aviv:

A kibbutz in the Beisan Valley was attacked by Iraqi and Syrian forces with tanks and heavy field artillery. The defenders of the kibbutz had only light arms and homemade hand grenades. Shortly after the attack was launched, a sudden heavy rain came, although rain during the summer sea-

son is virtually unknown in Palestine. It came in such a downpour that the heavy equipment of the attacking forces bogged down. The foot soldiers supporting the tank attack could not lie down because of the depth of the water in the field. As a result, the defenders of the kibbutz, capitalizing on their advantage, drove off the attackers and captured large quantities of their equipment.

At kibbutz Yavneh itself, the settlers, counter-attacking a hostile Arab village, were unaware that the Arabs had built several outposts. A sudden burst of fire informed the thirty-three members of the attacking party. Three were killed. The rest escaped only because at that moment it began to hail. The hail, again an unseasonal event, lasted for three minutes, or exactly long enough to provide cover for the boys to retreat.

Whether or not all Israelis accept these stories as proof of divine guidance, few consider their victory the result of their own efforts alone. Always, in varying degrees, respect is reserved for a Greater Power who has a hand in determining history. "God was with us." "It was the will of God." "Miraculous." These are phrases I repeatedly heard.

WHILE SOME critics have condemned Israel as a "secular" nation, others have accused her of trying to establish a theocracy. Curiously enough both accusations are frequently made by the same individuals and journals. Where Jews are involved, the standard of judgment is so often "damned if you do and damned if you don't."

There is in Israel a contest for control between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox. The Orthodox groups, by virtue of the fact that they with Mapai form the coalition government of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, have the upper hand. Accordingly, they have won the ruling that the food served the armed forces should be kosher. They argue that while kosher food does not violate the conscience of the non-Orthodox, the absence of kosher food does violence to the principles of the Orthodox. The opposition argues that such a provision limits the choice of the non-Orthodox and subjects him to the will of a minority. Presumably the non-Orthodox can get non-kosher food if he desires, but not with convenience.

Similarly, the strict observance of Sabbath laws has caused conflict. The non-Orthodox believe the Sabbath is for recreation as well as for meditation and study. Yet their desire to visit relatives or see the countryside on their one day off is impossible



Village children celebrate a Passover seder.

because buses do not run. The privileged few who own cars are not hampered by the Sabbath laws. But the non-Orthodox who have no cars have their liberty restricted again by a minority in the population.

These matters will be a part of public controversy for some time to come. One conclusion is clear: no theocracy will be established under such conditions.

Another matter deserves attention. Religious freedom, it is true, is a basic principle in Israel's draft constitution and is generally accepted, so that Moslem and Christian groups today have complete freedom to carry on their work. Yet it is not clear how this principle applies to groups within Judaism such as the Reform movement. Israel is following the old Turkish law whereby the various religious communities, Christian, Moslem and Jewish, are responsible for their own problems. They have their own religious courts and handle such matters as marriage and divorce. In Israel the Jewish religious group is dominantly, in fact almost exclusively, Orthodox. Therefore, Orthodoxy is in a position to dominate the religious courts and to make the rise of some liberal form of Judaism extremely difficult. This situation provoked a challenge to the government of Israel from

Dr. Abraham J. Feldman of Hartford, Connecticut, when he addressed the Convention of Reformed Rabbis in Bretton Woods on June 23, 1949. He charged the government with a refusal "to give religious freedom to the liberal Jewish communities in Israel" and maintained that liberal rabbis "have no standing before the rabbinical courts."

Obviously, a nation coming into being after an eclipse of 1900 years cannot be expected to have the precedents required to resolve such problems within the first year of its rebirth. A number of years may be required to develop a formula defining the relationship between synagogue and state and between Orthodoxy and other Jewish religious organizations.

While it is reasonable from the point of view of Reform Judaism to warn against "theocratic tendencies" in Israel, it is important for Christians to recognize that a theocracy has not been established and it is not at all likely that one will be established even within the framework of Judaism. Religious freedom is an accepted human right in Israel which means that no religious group in Israel can be considered an "established" church.

Israel is neither a theocracy nor a nation without God. It is a nation with strong spiritual foundations. New light will flow again from Zion.

A Reed That Cannot Be Broken

SINGING and dancing—wherever one looked—mothers, fathers and children, joining together. No hilarity, in the sense of having a good time to forget the reality of life, but laughter of the soul, indicating a joy that cannot be suppressed. This, to me, is Israel of 1949—a land of unexampled and unconquerable spirit, a reed that cannot be broken.

Through this spirit a new nation has been raised up. It is a spirit characterized by intense devotion to a cause, unparalleled sacrifice and a brotherly sense of sharing.

That is what turned the burning hopes and prayers of two thousand years into freedom and a homeland for the Jews of the world.

Israel fought hard in war . . . a handful against thousands, like David against Goliath. Here was one small nation numbering only a little over half a million, surrounded on three sides by the enemy numbering 35,000,000 and by the Mediterranean on the other, being taunted by the sons of fury, "We'll drive you into the open sea."

But however rocky and tortuous the road, however overwhelming the odds, the Jews held relentlessly to their appointed task until they had grasped, held firm and pressed to their breast the long-sought prize.

Fulfilled was the ancient prophecy: "This is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance."

Now accomplished was the first step to bring Israel into the family of nations. No longer will the Jews be trampled on as the sand.

What about the next step? Will the Jews succeed in building a nation? Will they succeed in assimilating the hundreds of thousands pouring in from Europe? Can they establish a sound economy in a land about one-eighth the size of Minnesota? Will they fulfill the high ideals of democracy to which the nation is dedicated? Will they succeed in restoring the creative soul of Israel?

My answer to these questions must be "Yes!"

The people of Israel have few illusions about the future. They expect the years ahead to be difficult almost beyond comprehension.

The people of Israel—men, women and children

—fought like true soldiers in war. They will fight harder in peace. They are not blind to the problems which they face; but they are a sacrificing people who are determined to find a way out.

ICITE these reasons for my faith in Israel:

In the garden-like setting of Deganya, oldest and best established of the collective villages, I saw people working together at an unexampled level of cooperation. They toiled not for profit, but happily and proudly for the joy of working and developing their colony.

In the children's villages, the once-dispossessed are now learning a new way of life. A look at the education movement called "Youth Aliyah"¹ leads to the conclusion that Israel is staking its trust in youth as the citizens of tomorrow and the hope of the future.

The unbridled joy displayed in Tel Aviv at the celebration of Labor Day, May 1st, and State Day, May 4th, indicated unmistakably how dear to the heart of every Jew was victory, peace and liberty. Never in my life have I seen such a spirited people. The children were singing and dancing and exaltation filled the air.

Surprising to me, the Arab unit received the biggest ovation in the parade. It is not strange in the light of this incident that so many Arabs have elected to remain in Israel. In understanding and with justice, Jews are treating them as good neighbors.

I came away from the Weizmann Institute of Science convinced that here were some of the best minds of the world and that they will discover many possibilities of production. One is certain that they will succeed in finding better methods and produce more adaptable materials for the cultivation of the land and for industry.

Even now it is remarkable how they have made things grow—flowers and fruit out of the rocks and out of the sand. Truly they are making the desert place to bloom like the rose.

¹ The Youth Aliyah or Youth Immigration movement has brought some 50,000 children into Israel in the last fifteen years. The chief American agency for its support is Hadasah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

Most convincing of all evidence that the Jews are deadly serious in making of Israel a great nation was an incident that took place in the ruins of a shell-blasted kibbutz.

Two young fellows were rooting about in the debris gathering anything they could find which might be used in building.

I engaged one of them in conversation. He told me he was less than thirty years of age, and had lived in Chicago until coming to Israel nine months ago. He was well-educated and had held a fine position in the United States.

"Why," I asked him, "did you leave your former home to come here to live in these conditions of hardship?" He looked at me and his countenance lighted up. Then pointing to the ground he said, "*This is mine.*" Here he could live in the quiet and peace of a land where those surrounding him understood him and where he could feel an inner security of spirit.

I stepped free of the rubble and debris, but the dust from the ruins clung to my feet. For many minutes I reflected on the words the American Jew had spoken. In a way, the words struck me as an indictment.

For two thousand years the Jew had wandered. He had been dispossessed and homeless, persecuted and reviled.

In my work as chairman of the Minneapolis Human Relations Council, I had first-hand experience with minority problems. It has been my conviction that if more of us lived by the precepts and faith which we professed, and followed the admonition to "love one another" and become "doers of the Word," perhaps much of the suffering and hardship in the lives of other races and creeds would never have occurred. But I also have the conviction that it is not too late to make atonement.

As I observed the Jew in Israel I found him a deeply and emotionally religious person. I discovered the Jewish people had tremendous respect for the Holy Places that meant so much to me. From a German deaconess who had charge of a leper colony in Jerusalem—an area where centered some of the most vicious fighting—I learned that the Jewish soldiers did their utmost to protect Christian Holy Places. Where damage inadvertently was done, the Jewish government now is making amends.

It was a Jewish scholar, Dr. Sukenik, of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem who provided me with one of the great moments of the trip. He told

me of research by the University Archaeology Department which had uncovered the earliest account yet brought to light concerning the crucifixion of Jesus. The account was written by an unknown follower of Jesus in 50 A.D.

"Isn't it strange," said Dr. Sukenik, "that I, a Jew, should find this authentic account of the life of Christ, when some Christian ministers in America claim that Jesus is a myth?"

A deep emotional experience also was mine in Israel. In an historic chapel near Jerusalem, I was permitted to play the organ. Moving my fingers over the keys, I found tears welling in my eyes as I played my mother's favorite hymn, "Just as I Am without One Plea."

I remembered, in those moments, my mother's deep and abiding faith in her God and her understanding and love for all people. I resolved then to do my utmost in following the example of my mother who exemplified the spirit of the one she served in a demonstration of love.

We all must learn to share love and understanding with one another—even as the people of Israel have shared in order to make a centuries-dream come true.

What a tremendous lesson in sharing there is in the description of the River Jordan coursing down to the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee, a lake of sweet water, says: "Welcome, River Jordan. You have given life to flowers, trees and grass along your banks. Now welcome." But then it adds, "You are too good to keep, so I will pass you on and share you with the sea below."

But the Dead Sea, with no outlet, says: "I am receiving now the sweet water of the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan and I will keep it and never give it to anyone."

And it did, and now nothing lives in these waters. It is a lesson for living. If one seeks to keep all good things without sharing, his soul will die.

With a philosophy of sharing, the Israeli have done the impossible. And wherever I went throughout my visit in this new nation, a thought kept flashing back of my mind—a thought about a Community Chest poster in America.

The poster showed the picture of a girl holding a crippled child, who was nearly her own size. In the caption the girl says: "He's not heavy. He's my brother." That spirit is the spirit of Israel today—and that reed can never be broken.

Promise of the New Israel

A FULL MOON rose over the Syrian hills and unrolled a path of light across the water that is so sacred to so many thousands — Lake Kinnereth of the Jew, the Sea of Galilee of the Christian, Bahr Tubariya of the Moslem.

The air was still, warm and caressing. The mountains back of Tiberias, that rise almost sheer from Galilee's edge, took on haunting shades of subdued color in the brilliant moonlight.

A sense of timelessness envelops you beside these waters now rippling-quiet in the evening — waters made peaceful in one of their stormy moods two thousand years ago by the power of a Jewish leader whose ideas changed a large part of mankind.

Maybe because Galilee, deep in its mountain fastness, is nearly 700 feet below sea level, you feel a remoteness from the rest of the world. You are touched by the mystery that broods over the East. All ages past seem to have left something of themselves by these shores.

I was thinking of all that I had seen in the new Israel. The commingling of the ancient and the modern, the settled and the pioneer elements, seemed incongruous. I was endeavoring to sort out my impressions and put my thoughts in order.

Most magnificent was the manner in which the young state, released from Britain's leading strings only after it had been shorn of all power to defend itself (or so the world thought), had come victoriously through the ordeal of battle, from the defense of Negba and the smashing of the Egyptians in the south to the liberation of ancient, hallowed Safad on its Galilean mountain top.

For a time I had lived with these people and had come to appreciate the meaning of the phrase uttered by Yehuda Nediya, town clerk of Tel Aviv, by way of explanation for the military triumph: "Out here in Israel we have bred the first generation of Jews in two thousand years that instinctively strikes back."

And this generation had raised a government that was approaching its civilian problems with a determination different only in kind from the determination that made military victory possible.

Most melodramatic was the problem of the Arab refugees, about which the American public has been misled by those who call themselves Christian without a thought for the meaning of the name. There is also the problem of the Jewish immigrants — the 300,000 that have come since the establishment of the state, from the D.P. camps of Europe, from persecution in neighboring Arab countries and North Africa. Then there are the tedious but vital problems of housing, of agriculture, of industry.

Any other people or any other nation would have resigned in discouragement in the face of such overwhelming tasks. I thought much about these things that night. About the pioneers of the settlements, the idealists who put their all into their belief. About the new people ready to give all to hold what had been so hardly won. About the youth, the pledge to the future. Here was a spirit, manifest in thought and act, that gave courage to those of us from the West, surfeited with material achievements and cynicism, skeptical of all human endeavors. I had the conviction that these people would find the answers.

ALL THIS WAS here and now. Yet I didn't dream how near the past could be. Or how the two were really one. I was soon to learn.

A few miles down the road to the south a great celebration was being held up on the mountain side. This was the anniversary of the death of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes, and pilgrims and devotees from all of Galilee were gathered to participate in the observance which included dancing and music and bonfires.

It was pleasant to walk along the sea in the moonlight, mingling with the happy, chattering people going to the shrine and coming from it. Rabbi Meir, the Wonder Worker, as he is called, was a happy soul and these people were happy. This was the first time the great teacher had been honored in a free Israel. Rome held sway when he lived and taught here in the second century. Indeed, there was reason for joy this night.

From far down the road a beacon fire in the tall

stone brazier in front of the synagogues could be seen. These fires that alternately smolder and flame are lighted on such special occasions. The pillars on which they are built date from Talmudic times. Old Israel followed the lunar month. Its irregularities made the exact fixing of festivals difficult. The Sanhedrin, the great ecclesiastical and judicial body at Jerusalem, determined the days and sent word to all the country by these beacons, from hill to hill, through Samaria and Galilee in the north, and from the Judean hills down through the south.

As I approached the synagogues and started up the rocky path to the courtyard of the yeshiva or religious academy and the hostel that were built next to the Sephardic synagogue, I heard the rhythmic beat of a primitive drum. It was keeping time for a group of young people who were dancing the traditional hora, the circle step that is Israel's national dance. Singing, shouting, milling crowds churned through the courtyard and up the steps into the synagogue.

From inside came a hubbub of voices and chanting, blending weirdly with the yellow light of thousands upon thousands of candles that sputtered and smelled, filling the holy place with an acrid odor, as tallow dripped onto the floor and into great iron basins set up around the hall to catch it.

To one side of the synagogue, facing the tomb of Rabbi Meir, scores of pilgrims were huddled on their rugs, their sheepskins, their coats. They had come from all over northern Israel and judging by their raiment, from every country on the globe. Some tried to sleep, others sat cross-legged and a few wearily watched the throngs as they came up to the tomb of the man who is called a saint by the Jews.

Behind the grillwork in front of the tomb sat the rabbis. In one corner an old man was swaying back and forth as he read his prayers while a dutiful son listened intently. Men and women streamed to the tomb of the miracle worker, kissed it and turned their right ear to its stone wall to listen for a message. Legend says that good news will be heard on Rabbi Meir's day by all who follow this ritual.

THESE JEWS were Sephardim, descendants of those who lived originally in Spain and were exiled from it in the fifteenth century, resettling in North Africa, the Balkans and the Middle East. In the synagogue above, higher up the mountain, through whose floor appeared the top of Rabbi



Mr. Irwin converses with the Hon. James G. McDonald, United States Ambassador to Israel.

Meir's tomb, Ashkenazi Jews — those who stem from Germany and north and central Europe — were honoring the old teacher.

It was among the Ashkenazi, whose existence in the ghettos of Poland, Russia and other European countries was bleak beyond words, that the sect of the Chassidim took hold. The members of this sect brought joy into their lives by maintaining that God could be honored with song and dance as well as through the devout and continuous study of the Torah so ardently emphasized by most Jews at the time.

Here on the Galilean hilltop Chassidism was in full flower. With a drum, a clarinet and a violin, music was being played to which the men and boys of the Chassidim danced their dances of ecstasy with God. In them, dramatically, they depicted their past, their legends, their history, but, most important, they revealed their aspirations, their longing for identity with the Most High.

The curtain that time places before and behind men was gone. This could just as easily have been a few years after the famed rabbi's death, as 1949. For a moment, maybe it was. This was the threshold of man's ancient quest for the Infinite, a joyous seeking of unity with God, and it mattered not a whit where and when some arbitrary map or calendar said it was.

My mind raced forward and backward. Here were the people who had given the world the great idea first of one God. They had found the answer in the wilderness millenia ago. Christian and Moslem had accepted that God as their own.

If I as a Christian and a western man believed in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man it was because of these very people who be-

fore my eyes now were expressing their gratitude and their fervor. To them I owed a debt that could never be fully repaid.

I remembered that from this very ground another Jew, a man who understood mankind as has no other, preached a doctrine, a Judaic doctrine, that altered history and changed the lives of millions through the centuries. Greater for good would have been that alteration and happier the lives of millions, had not those who professed His ideas been too lax in the application of them.

In this narrow strip of earth, from Dan to Beersheba, from the sea to the swift waters of Jordan, once again mankind may be called on to recognize the divine spark that is within. Is it too much to assume that these same people who today, unashamedly as in the past, profess their belief in God, their acceptance of miracles and try to live as they think, restored to their ancient land and in the same environment which bred the first great truths, will find new truths as important and as universal, among them the fact that man need not falter or fail in his relationships with his fellows if into his councils he admits the spiritual factor?

What the new Israel is doing, to state it bluntly,

is putting God into politics. The rest of the world, over-confident, eschewing any consideration of the great truths, finds its world tumbling about its ears. Once again a way is being evolved on the sacred soil of the Near East.

Here, then, is the promise of the new Israel. And to it can be added the hope that it will re-emphasize the brotherhood of man and show that similarities rather than peculiarities among people should be stressed. And last, the very existence of the new state is itself a proclamation to the world that those who cling to the law through every vicissitude will triumph in the end, for it was the law alone which enabled the Jews to survive two thousand years of oppression and returned them safely to their homeland. From this, indeed, the Christian may be able to learn to be a bit more Christian.

Then all men, whoever they are, wherever they may be, can look about them, be their race, nationality and creed what it will, and say with conviction: "This land is mine," for all the world will be home to all men.

Shalom!

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